# THE McGILL DAILY

Thursday, December 7, 1995

Volume 85 • Number 36

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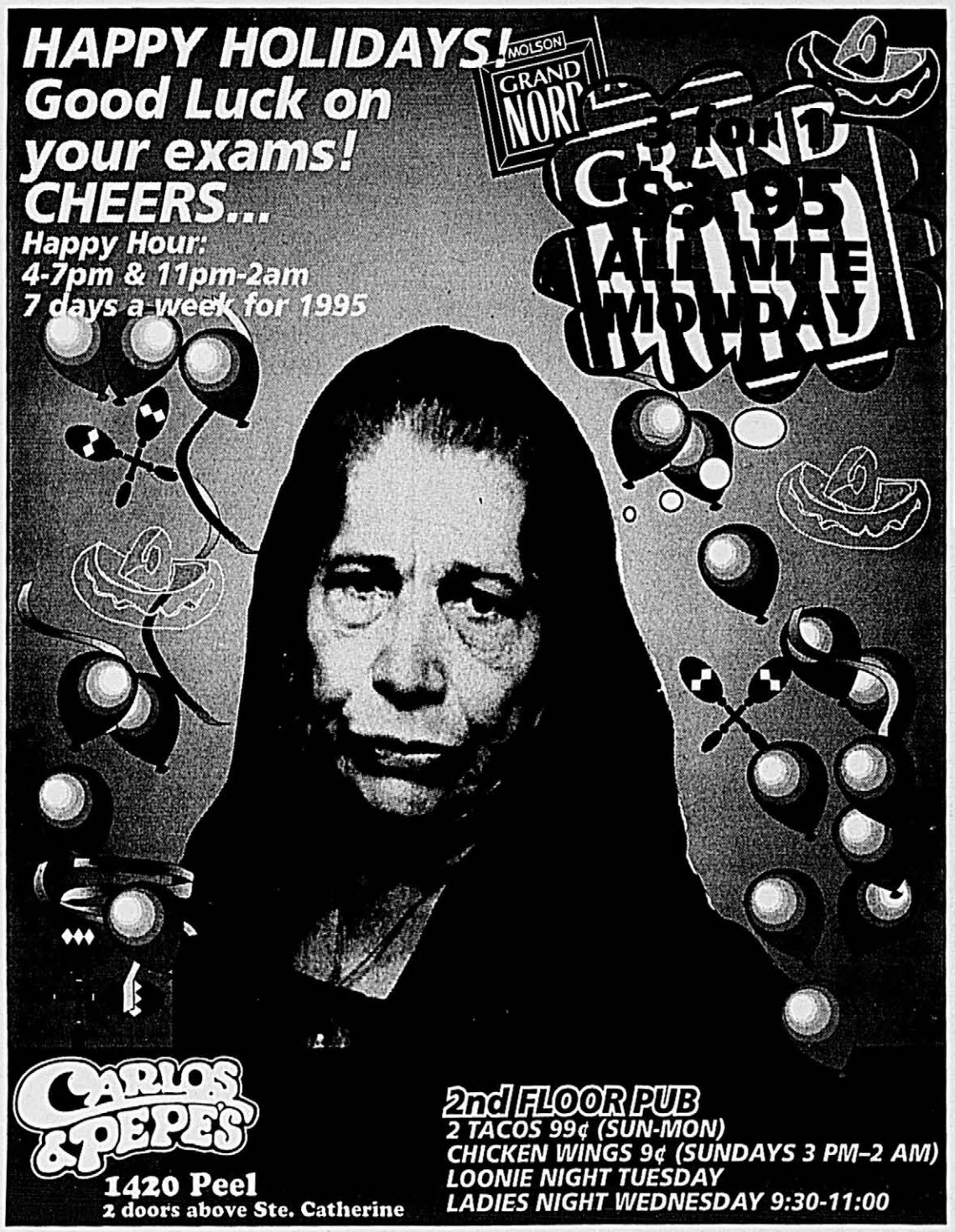


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# SYMBOLS NO SOLUTION

Every year before December 6th, white ribbons appear on lapels to commemorate the 14 women in the engineering department of the École Polytechnique who were killed in the December 6th, 1989 Montréal massacre. The ribbons serve as a reminder of a situation which reached crisis proportions, and as a symbol of a commitment to preventing similar acts of violence.

But when friends are forced to leave town to escape abusive partners, and friends go to court bruised to see their abusers acquitted, it becomes evident that the crisis period is not over. And it becomes apparent that white ribbons are not enough.

Acts of symbolism are not just reserved to white ribbons however. When situations reach a publicly recognised crisis point as with the December 6th massacre, leaders are forced to pledge reform, using buttons and posters to demonstrate their dedication to a cause. They vow to take measures to end racism, child prostitution, exploitation of the immigrant labour force and violence against women.

However, rape is still used as a war tactic, abortion clinic workers are killed with praise, migrant homeworkers continue to be abused by their employers, women are fired for trying to organise other workers and funding for shelters is being cut.

The recent passing of the federal government's gun control law, was hailed as a victory for the survivors of the December 6th massacre as it is one concrete solution to the problem of violence against women. The law which forces firearm users to register their weapons at the same time infringes on Native hunting rights and may grant police the dangerous freedom to search anyone on command.

The symbolism of this law extends to the point that December 6th was considered as the official signing date.

However the new law is no solution to violence because the problem is still not attacked at its source. Resources for men who abuse have always been sparse, and are becoming more so in places like Ontario with the closing of halfway houses.

Furthermore this law does not protect women, or anyone else, from knives or fists, nor does it provide beds or other services for women who are attempting to break the cycle of violence.

A much as this law may be a gesture towards real change, it should also be seen largely as a symbolic gesture, on the part of the federal government. Again, it falls short of ending the situation of violence against women, when in this era of decreased social spending, the crisis has just begun.

***Comment by Maija Martin***

**THE McGILL DAILY**
*Since 1911*
VOL. 85 • No. 36

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***ISSN 1192-4608***

# A mandate for change

## *An open class evaluation of* Social Change in the Caribbean

If we agree that the size of a university class is a good indicator of interest in a subject, then McGill students are clearly interested in the Caribbean. Unfortunately, our recent experiences as students in *Social Change in the Caribbean* have revealed a lack of commitment, at the teaching and administrative level, in providing students with informative and critical courses on the Caribbean.

Our saga began this fall, when over 70 students crammed into 321 Leacock during the "shopping period" to get a feel for this course. As it is the only course offered at McGill about the Caribbean, many of us were eager to finally have the opportunity to talk about an area of personal interest which, though close, is absent from the mainstream media (e.g. How much did *you* hear about Hurricane Luis?).

The administration failed to put a cap on the course and also to find a larger room — anywhere in the entire university — to accommodate the unexpectedly large numbers. This left many of us still sitting on the floor two weeks later. Our professor was forced to reorganise the class due to the potential fire hazard. He divided us into two groups, each of which would alternate between three lectures and two conferences bi-weekly — a loss of seven classes over the entire semester. As this was certainly not what we had bargained/paid for, many students complained.

But this was only the beginning. The course guidelines had stressed an emphasis on the present structure of Caribbean societies, with a *reference* to history, but Professor Locher 's lectures appeared hopelessly stuck in the past. Though our main text was edited by Caribbean scholars, the most recent article was from the early 1980's and our secondary text, though current, was not specific to the Caribbean. (Furthermore, students couldn't help but gasp as he spoke of slavery as producing "competent agriculturalists!")

As students, our questions and challenges were also dealt with in a cursory manner, poisoning the atmosphere of the class with a disturbing silence. Though ultimately much responsibility for dialogue lies with students, most of us had no background in Caribbean history/sociology, and as a result were unable to respond. Though we approached the professor, he appeared unresponsive. This was particularly frustrating as he was out of the country before the mid-term. Since our T.A.'s concentration is Criminology, and not the Sociology of the Caribbean, she was unable to offer much help. To add insult to injury, we have been informed that Professor Locher would like us to do some research for the exam but will not be present during our final exam to clarify exam instructions.

Overall, the course has left us frustrated and disappointed. For a 300 level course, we have come out with far less knowledge about Caribbean people and their societies than we had hoped. Some of us left feeling "down" and offended as nothing positive was said about the accomplishments these societies have made. The response from some Caribbean students, was telling: " *This* is not *my* story," said one student; Professor Locher gave the impression that "Caribbean people contributed nothing," said another.

We feel that the experiences we have had in this course indicate the need for changes. We call for constructive changes to this course which would make it more contemporary and relevant. Given the size of the Caribbean population in Montréal, we know that there is a wealth of first-hand experience from which this course could benefit. A more motivated, more approachable and less ethno-centric professor is also integral to a healthy class environment, where debate is welcome.

Most importantly, we believe that the inadequacy of this course re-emphasises why Africana Studies, which would include a study of the Caribbean, must be a priority at this University. As McGill undergoes massive restructuring, we demand that its student population and our interests are better represented through the curriculum.

***By concerned members of Social Change in the Caribbean 166-321A***

## Benedict story not relevant?

**To the *Daily*,**

Though I can appreciate that your writer must have put a fair amount of effort into "Trials of the *Tribune*," I was extremely disappointed to find that his paraphrasing of my views were so misleading. In blankly stating that I felt that the story in question was "not relevant," he managed to completely obscure the point which I had repeatedly made.

I felt the story was indeed relevant. However, when the editorial board had begun to discuss the story about Nick Benedict's alleged misconduct, we set out three criteria for ourselves: 1. We wanted 10 affidavits — we got four; 2. we wanted publishable evidence that Benedict was acting improperly this year, which we could not deliver; 3. we wanted publishable evidence linking Benedict's alleged misconduct to his position. Though most of us believe that the jobs of student politicians are not constrained within a 9 to 5 period, as this was a news article, we wanted more explicit evidence.

Though not meeting these criteria does not detract from the story's relevance, these are the points that we had originally set forth for ourselves, and I personally believe we had to stand by those.

Your writer apparently tried to include some of these aspects one paragraph below. However, because he separated the notion of relevance from those aspects which I used to define the term, I consider that my position has been misrepresented. There seems to have been an attempt to make the editor-in-chief of the rival paper say that she does not regard the misconduct of a student leader as relevant. This message is false.

***Sylvie Babarik***
***Editor-in-chief of the Tribune***
**THE McGILL DAILY**

LETTERS

EDITORIAL

NEWS 4→$

# SSMU ELECTS NEW VP EXTERNAL

## Andrea Stairs presents her vision

*by Roberta Laucke*

At their meeting last Thursday, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) elected a new vp external to fill the seat recently vacated by Nick Benedict's resignation.

Nominated for the position were Clubs Representatives Sara Mayo and Chris Carter, and Arts Representative Andrea Stairs. Although Stairs was elected to succeed Benedict, her objectives seem similar to his.

"My views don't differ radically from Nick's but there are subtleties... My focus is on raising our profile. This was not a top priority of Nick's although it was one of his [priorities]. I am also involved with CASA [the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations], as was Nick... The differences [between us] will come out as I learn more about my job," she said.

In her opening speech, Stairs discussed student needs. "The next few months are critical. The government is looking at changes in education.... We have to move forward to support student views on campus," she said.

"I think we are well on the way to having a big profile on the national level but we have slightly neglected what happens on the provincial level," she added.

Carter agreed that students' needs must come first, but thinks they should be consulted more. "We need to regain the respect and trust of the student body. We need someone who is democratic and a leader.... We know more about students in Alberta [than about the needs of our own student body]," he said.

Mayo addressed the issue of team work within the Students' Society. "No matter who is elected, the next vp external has to be able to work with people. Council and executives have to work as a team. We have to do what is best for students," she said.

Stairs stressed that one priority will be to participate as much as possible in the Etats Généraux, the commission currently re-evaluating the provincial school system.

"I think with the PQ government deciding to take a break from sovereignty issues and look at the educational system... we have to get our voices heard at that level because that is where education lies and tuition hikes come from," she added.

### Questioning CASA membership and more

VP Finance Kelly Remai asked the candidates what they plan to do with the money left in this year's External Affairs budget.

When Benedict resigned, council learned about his financial mismanagement, as he had failed to follow the proper authorisation procedures and subsequently went over budget.

Carter said that if elected he would follow all the proper procedures and remain accountable to students. "We have a fiscal responsibility. It is ridiculous if people spend money randomly. [We need] publicity and awareness for external issues and have forms to deal with these issues," he said.

Stairs also stressed her willingness to play by the rules, adding that she will spend the remaining funds on attending conferences on educational reform.

"I pledge I will be responsible. The beginning of the last two weeks Kelly Remai briefed me on financial procedures.... I think this shows my willingness to play by the rules. [I would like to] spend the money to send at least one student to the national symposium on education," she said.

The candidates were also questioned about SSMU's current membership in CASA, and whether or not it is in students' interests to maintain this relationship.

In October, CASA launched its Real Choices campaign with suggestions for alternative methods of funding post-secondary education.

These methods include cutting "wasteful" university expenditures and implementing a graduate surtax system, where students would not only pay tuition fees to attend classes, but later pay for their education again by contributing to a second beneficiary fund.

Carter said students must be asked whether or not they think it is beneficial to stay in CASA.

"If elected the first thing I would do is establish a mandate for the position from students to push a referendum for CASA [membership]. We need to allow students to decide. It is not between bureaucrats. We need a vp external who will listen and represent the students," he said.

Mayo agreed. "It is important to put this question to the students. It is the students' money we're spending on it," she said.

But Stairs insisted that the Students' Society will remain in CASA as long as she is the vp external, adding that submitting this question to students is not an option. She has been serving as interim regional director on the CASA board of directors since Benedict's resignation.

"We cannot afford a referendum on CASA. It would be financially irresponsible to do that before a spring referendum," said Stairs.

On the subject of the impending hike in tuition fees, the new vp external said that students must appreciate Canada's financial situation.

"I'm not for raising tuition but that does not mean there are not other alternatives," she said, citing possibilities such as graduate taxes or income-contingent loans repayment plans.

"That does not mean I am approving [these measures]. The main point is that while we say no to tuition hikes we have to be aware of the fiscal situation of our country and that means coming up with alternatives," Stairs stated.

However, this past September, Brad Lavigne, a member of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) told the *Daily* that CASA's alternative funding plans "miss the mark completely."

"This is not a solution to a funding crisis... This grad surtax will do nothing for accessibility for Canadians to the system... Where we need to start from is a reinvestment in the system," he stressed.

"What is needed is not a selected tax on those [who have] gone through the system. What is needed is a program to form a taxation across the board whereby these people like [the] wealthy and corporations begin to contribute their share. A progressive form of tax would allow us to fund all social programs," Lavigne continued.

### But can we walk through the ghetto safely?

Mayo, Carter and Stairs were also asked if they will be re-seeking membership in the Fédération des Étudiants Universitaires de Québec (FEUQ) and if not, how they would ensure that the interests of McGill students are addressed at the provincial level.

In the past, FEUQ members have pooled their voices to fight for accessible education and the establishment of a sovereign state. This year FEUQ has already held two demonstrations opposing tuition fee hikes.

But Stairs insisted that the Students' Society cannot join this separatist organisation. "We cannot [join]. That means more work for us," she said.

"But that is what the VP is there for: to make links, talk to reps, make decisions. To use the process for all it is worth," she quickly conceded.

Mayo urged Stairs to re-consider the possible benefits of joining of FEUQ. "Not joining FEUQ is a bad idea. We have to build with them. We lose by not being part of them.... We need to build bridges provincially and federally. CFS and FEUQ are important to be members of," she said.

Stairs later amended, "We have no immediate plans to join FEUQ in the future but that does not mean we cannot be in touch on a one to one basis. That does not mean we cannot get our voice heard on a provincial level."

Law Representative Mitch Costom then asked the nominees to explain what they intend to do about the ghetto safety audit that was conducted by members of SSMU and other groups two years ago.

The audit was done to assess the safety problems in the McGill ghetto, the area east of the Milton Gates where many McGill students live. With the project heading into its third year, changes have yet to be made.

According to Mayo, Montréal has been slow to implement SSMU's proposals. "There are a lot of things we can do. Unfortunately, the administration of the city does not like to work with people. We have to try, but it takes lots of time. [We have] good ideas," she said.

"We're continuing with [our] effort to fix the ghetto," Stairs echoed, adding that she has no concrete plans at the moment.

Stairs said she ran for vp external because she has a "solid base of experience" to take over effectively and contribute to external issues such as the safety audit and tuition fees.

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SSMU'S NEW VP EXTERNAL, ANDREA STAIRS

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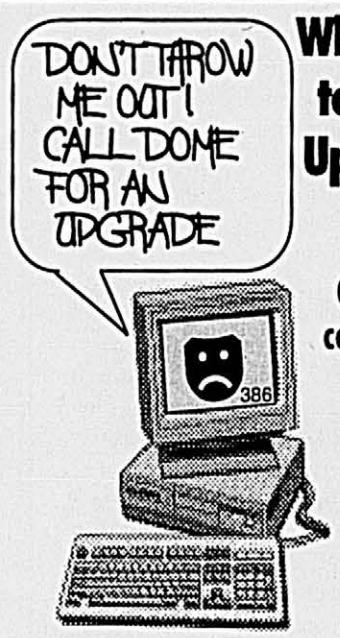

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- **Centre for Developing Area Studies** presents "Roads to Exclusion: Surviving the Streets of Ottawa and Accra," a comparative look at the lives of children living on the streets in Canada and Ghana. CDAS Seminar Rm 100, 3715 Peel, 12h.

## Saturday, Dec. 9

- Yawp's folk/country **Hootenanny**, 21h, Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent, $3.

## Wednesday, Dec. 13

- **University Women's club of Montréal** Christmas Cocktail à la Fourchette at the Montréal Badminton and Squash Club, Atwater Ave., 18h. Reservations: 747-3801 or 935-4097.

## Ongoing

- **Loaf Organic Food Co-op** orders bulk produce and dried goods on Mondays, 11h30-17h30, at the QPIRG office, 3647 University. If you want to eat well and responsibly, drop by and check us out.
- **Galerie Fokus** presents "Exposition des Photographies Internationales de Cameron Booth," from 5 Dec. - 5 Jan. Vernissage on Dec. 16 at 17h., 68 Duluth East.
- **Tel-Aide**, a free 24 hour, seven-day-a-week listening service available to Montrealers in distress, is looking for men and women who have a few hours a week to listen to people who need to talk about their problems. To find out about the training program which begins in Jan., phone 935-1105.
- Community/social/ecological groups or activists in need of projects funds are invited to a meeting of the **Community Alliance Network**, which has resources and funds to help you. Info: 937-7236.

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# Corporate Brief

## MARTINA SEEING THE RAINBOW

Martina Navratilova and Subaru of America have sponsored a new credit card, the Rainbow Card, aimed specifically at lesbians and gay men. A portion of the profits from the credit card will be channeled to the Rainbow Card Foundation, which will then donate funds to six non-profit organisations, including Community Research Initiative on AIDS and the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

The card is the brain child of Pam Derderian, chief executive of Do Tell Inc., a marketing company that created the card and got Subaru on board as a chief sponsor.

"The keystone of this is Martina," said Tim Mahoney, marketing strategy manager for Subaru, "because she has incredible credibility not only in the gay community, but in the straight community."

Navratilova will function as an unpaid public spokesperson for the Rainbow Card.

"She came out when many of us were in the closet," said Derderian, "and few were willing to join her and say 'I'm gay too.'"

The Rainbow Card is one of many examples of how companies are trying to take advantage of a new and growing market. Many companies now have advertising campaigns directed at gay and lesbian people.

Weinman Ford in Chicago has ads with couples Dennis and Bill and Janet and Jackie, and Atlantic Records and American Airlines both have sales departments directed at gay and lesbians.

Grant Lukenbill, author of *Untold Millions: Positioning Your Business for Gay and Lesbian Consumer Revolution*, writes that the gay and lesbian population has characteristics similar to those of yuppies in the '80s: a hefty disposable income and a willingness to spend it.

7 ← $ CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

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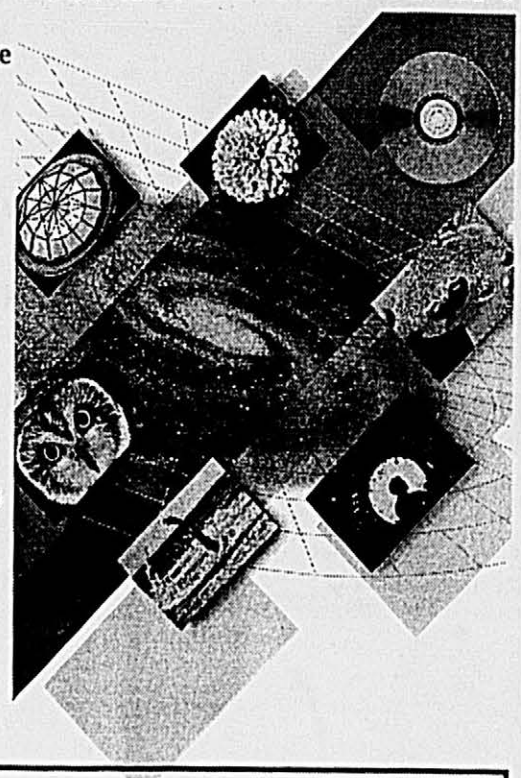

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## Comment

# WHAT'S THE POINT?

"We have Cherry Coke — I mean Cherry Pepsi," said the waitress at Dunn's deli as she listed the available drinks.

With boycotts and evil corporate practices on our minds, we exchanged glances, sighed and said "Just water, thanks."

Noticing our little exchange, our waitress asked "What's the matter with Pepsi?"

We told her that there was a boycott against Pepsi because of its support for Burma's military regime. She said "Oh, well. You could probably find something bad about every company."

That's true.

After dinner, we walked down St. Catherine St. only to be confronted by Christmas displays and surrounded by the December consumer craze.

And that is why it is so important, not just now but all year, to take a close look at the practices of companies and also of consumers.

On St. Catherine St. there's the Gap, for example, with its "affordable" trend-setting outfits popular among student shoppers. It is under fire for its not-so-cool treatment of employees in El Salvador, who are often the same age as the teenage girl standing beside you in the Gap's check-out line.

Keep walking down the strip and you will soon encounter the equally hip Limité, which brings the Gap controversy home with its hard-nosed attitude toward employees.

Before you go running from these fashion crimes, however, take a moment to redirect. Would a trip to the bastion of body-feel-good help? If so, The Body Shop and its somewhat promising corporate mandate is not far off. And if their all-natural dewberry shampoo sounds a bit dubious to you, you can drown your worries in a pint of Chunky Monkey close by at Ben & Jerry's.

So what are we saying? That you may not be able to wear anything but you can smell good and eat a lot of ice-cream instead?

Not exactly.

What we are saying, and what we were trying to tell our waitress at Dunn's, is that as a responsible consumer, you can shop 'til you drop — with a conscience.

In other words, you can make choices as a consumer.

You can forego that Pepsi high and venture away from this Pepsi-dominated campus to buy another drink. Or you can buy your white V-neck T-shirts somewhere other than at the Gap.

A special issue on corporate and consumer responsibility doesn't mean that we should ban the whole corporate world.

Just because most companies can be criticised does not mean that only criticising some of them is futile or hypocritical. Additionally, the idea that "my refusal to buy something won't make a difference" further impedes action.

This idea assumes that consumers do not have control, influence or power toward the companies which they patronise.

Elaine Lamy of Boston's INFACT, a consumer action group, comments "As consumers who vote with their dollars every time we support these companies, we have a responsibility to ensure that the company behaves in a socially responsible manner."

INFACT has organised many boycotts against corporate giants like General Electric, Nestlé and most recently, tobacco companies. In the case of GE, the boycott succeeded and the company bowed to public pressure for it to pull out of the nuclear business.

But boycotts are not always the answer. Many activists point out that boycotts should only be called when workers themselves ask for them. Otherwise, they can be more harmful than helpful.

One example is the international fur ban: Many animal rights groups fail to consider the interests of native fur-trappers.

In contrast, the long-standing boycott against California grapes was called by the same migrant Mexican grape harvesters who are forced to use pesticides which cause serious health problems.

Boycotts do not provide a solution in and of themselves, because change cannot just happen from the bottom-up, powerful though that may be.

Some corporations are beginning to adopt "socially responsible" practices, negotiating better labour contracts and providing a better working environment. Others are becoming more sensitive to the impact they have on the environment.

While mass action and change from corporations are important, the individual day-to-day shopper also has a role to play in consumer responsibility.

When it comes to shopping around for the best price, consumers assume more than their share of influence over companies. After all, the customer is always right.

We always hear that we live in a consumerist world. Theoretically, what companies sell us is supposed to be dictated by consumer demand.

If we identify ourselves so strongly as consumers, then why not reclaim the power inherent in this identity?

Imagine a consumer identity where what we valued was not only "the most for the least" but also responsible production.

In other words, imagine a consumer value-system where what we cared about was not only the quality or price of what we buy but also how companies treat their workers, environment and resources.

Imagining this kind of identity may not be so hard. According to a study released this week by UNITE, a union for Garment workers, respondents indicated they would use their purchasing power as consumers in a positive manner if given the opportunity and information necessary to do so.

Of course, forming a responsible consumer and corporate culture won't happen over night. Let's face it, even with the boycott against Pepsi, they're in no hurry to leave Burma. Not yet.

But this just reinforces the fact that none of these are simple issues and that being a responsible consumer is not an easy job. It's about making serious decisions and recognising the power of choice.

The following pages of our special issue are intended to be an introduction to that power of choice and to get you thinking about those decisions.

When we told our waitress at Dunn's about the Pepsi boycott, she said: "Thanks, now you've ruined it for me."

That's the point.

***comment by Anup Grewal and Idella Sturino***

**THE McGILL DAILY**

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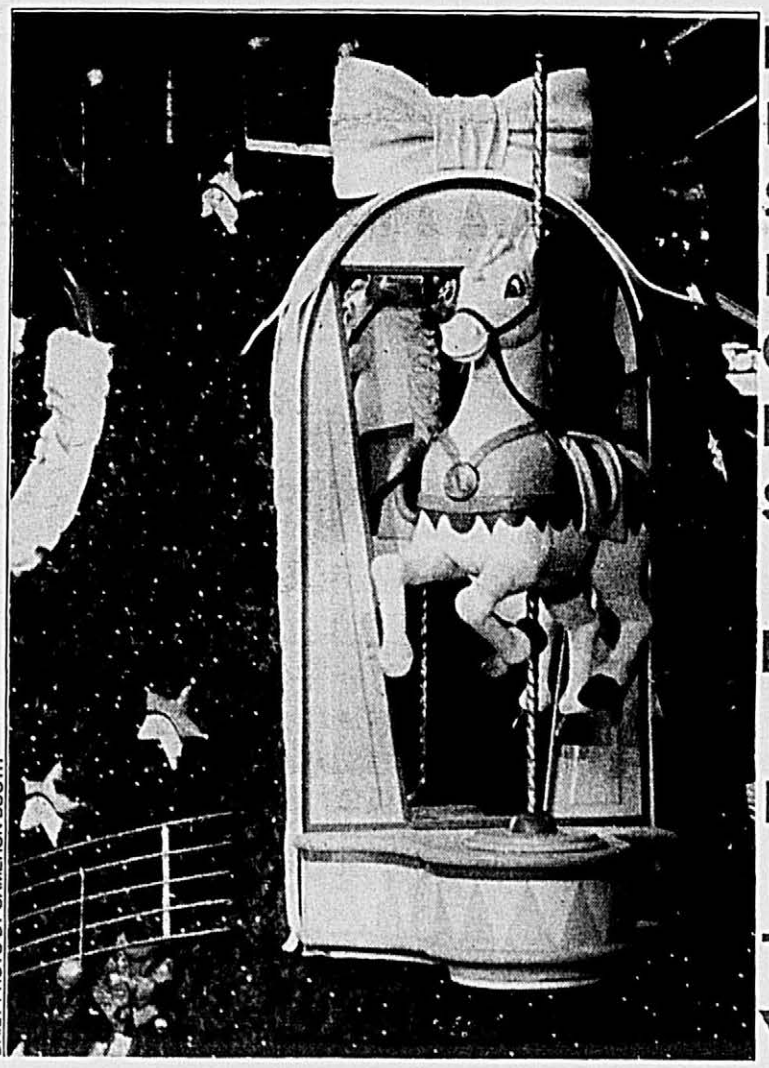
CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY



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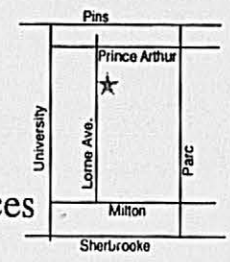


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# WHAT NOT TO WEAR THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



CORPORATE CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

## THE GAP PULLS OUT OF EL SALVADOR...

## LEAVING WORKER EXPLOITATION IN ITS WAKE

*by Idella Sturino*

The Gap has attracted a lot of attention recently, and it is not good for business.

Last Friday, about 300 people demonstrated in front of one of New York City's largest Gap stores in the heart of the city's shopping district. They were protesting the clothing store's recent decision to stop placing orders with the Taiwanese-owned Mandarin International factory in El Salvador, a source of Gap clothing for the past few years.

The demonstration was one of many staged across the U.S. by the American-based National Labor Committee.

In June the NLC, a non-profit research group which investigates the status of human rights in offshore production plants, helped bring reports of employee mistreatment at Mandarin to public attention.

The San Francisco-based Gap's response to these reports was to say that there was no choice but to remove Mandarin from its list of subcontractors, while at the same time maintaining that it is "unable to confirm" the allegations of human rights violations raised against the factory.

In a recent consumer response letter, the Gap's Sourcing and Logistics Senior VP Stanley Raggio, referring to reports of worker mistreatment at the factory, stated that "the Gap feels it has an obligation not to contribute to or foster this situation any further. Since we neither own nor control Mandarin, the only way it seems possible to do that is to take these specific actions."

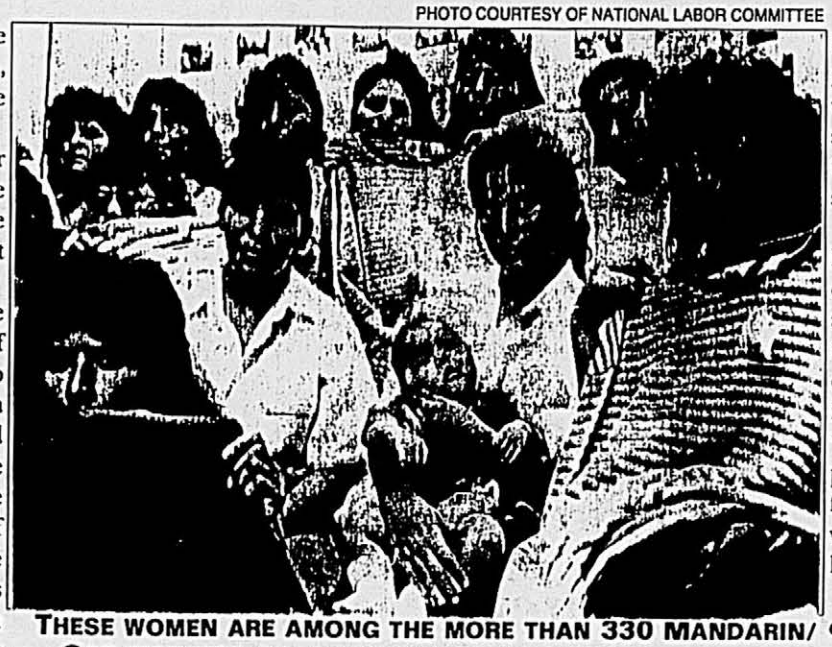
But labour groups and solidarity workers say the decision is a cop-out because it disregards workers' rights by leaving the mistreatment and violations that Mandarin's management has been criticised for intact. These groups say the Gap should work with Mandarin managers to ensure that the reform the workers are calling for occurs.

David Cook of the NLC says of the pull-out, "They're saying 'Because we don't own the place, we have no responsibility.' What we're saying is, 'You pay them... you should be responsible to them.'"

He adds, "They're absolving responsibility."

Efforts to keep pressure on the Gap during the holiday season are also being organised in Canada. Yesterday, protesters outside the Gap store on Toronto's trendy Queen St. West demanded the company stay in El Salvador to enforce its code of conduct rather than leave.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE



THESE WOMEN ARE AMONG THE MORE THAN 330 MANDARIN/ GAP WORKERS FIRED FOR DARING TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS

factories like Mandarin, which produce "affordable" clothes for companies like the Gap, Eddie Bauer and Fruit of the Loom.

The testimonies of the sweatshop employees from El Salvador and Honduras made it clear that the cost of producing these clothes is actually a high one, paid for mostly through the exploitation of young, female employees.

Many of the workers employed at Mandarin are teen-aged girls, paid only 16 cents for every $20 Gap shirt produced — an amount which they attest is not nearly enough to live on.

The Gap says it paid El Salvador's minimum wage and that workers gained from its employment opportunities. But when NLC asked women workers at Mandarin whether their children benefited from their wages, the women admitted that they did not have enough money to feed their children properly.

NLC reports also found that employees were subjected to unsafe and unfair restrictions while on the job, often being prohibited from talking to each other. They were also allowed to make only one brief trip to the washroom during a 12-hour shift, said 18-year-old Judith Viera of El Salvador while on the speaking tour this summer.

A recent investigation of Mandarin conducted by the Human Rights Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of San Salvador revealed further problems with worker mistreatment. Mandarin's punishment for poor work included four-day suspensions without pay as well as physical and verbal abuse by supervisors, the report says. It also states that workers were forced to work overtime without proper pay and were denied the health care benefits paid for through wage deductions.

**Employees were subjected to unsafe and unfair restrictions while on the job, often being prohibited from talking to each other. They were also allowed to make only one brief trip to the washroom during a 12-hour shift.**

### What goes into your $20 shirt

The Gap began making news this summer, when workers from Central American sweatshops began a North American speaking tour to raise awareness about the conditions in

### Where's the problem?

When allegations of employee mistreatment first surfaced this summer, the Gap launched its own investigation, visiting Mandarin for inspection and talking with over 60 workers. They claim to have found no evidence to support allegations of misconduct.

Despite the testimonials documented in the Archdiocese's report, the Gap continues to deny that such abuses were occurring.

**"[The Gap's action] sets an international bad precedent whereby any worker who wants to stand up and fight for their rights will lose their jobs."**

**— David Cook, National Labor Committee**

In September, Director of Sourcing and Trade Compliance Dotti Hatcher wrote in a letter distributed by the NLC that "the Mandarin factory treats its workers well and meets our standards of fairness and decency."

The Gap's Sourcing Principles and Guidelines, to which it demands all subcontracting factories comply, mandates the freedom of association of employees and prohibits "tactics of physical or psychological coercion in the workplace." The document states that "Wherever we do business, we are committed... to the fair and honest treatment of people."

Although the Gap has since pulled out of Mandarin, it has not affirmed any knowledge of violation of its Sourcing Principles, saying instead that the decision was made because the company "cannot reconcile the vastly different reports we have received concerning Mandarin," states a November consumer response letter.

But as Deena Ladd from the UNITE-Ontario District Council, an international garment workers union, says, "Washing their hands of it says a lot."

Ladd, a labour rights organiser and advocate with the union, asks of the Gap investigation, "If no problems were found, why would they leave?"

"The evidence is more than damning," she says.

### What they didn't find

Reports based on investigations of various agencies indicate that the Gap's investigation was missing a large part of the story.

In addition to reports of worker mistreatment by the Mandarin management and supervisors, the Archdiocese's report revealed a strong military presence in the factory, adding to an atmosphere of fear among workers.

The NLC, which has met extensively with Gap representatives since the summer, say the Gap denies any presence of armed security at Mandarin. Photographs taken by NLC members after sneaking into the Mandarin plant to document working conditions, however, reveal otherwise: Several guards armed with shotguns were posted at factory entrances.

The Archdiocese's report also details the security personnel's repression of several attempts by workers to unionise.

The Mandarin factory is located in the San Marcos Free Trade Zone, owned by former Salvadoran Army Col. Mario Guerrero. In 1993, in response to unsuccessful attempts by Mandarin workers to unionise, Col. Guerrero hired ex-military officers as security guards and administrators in the zone. According to the NLC, Col. Amaya was hired to administer the Mandarin plant.

The Gap has denied the employment of armed guards and Col. Amaya at the factory. The photographs taken by the NLC, however, show Col. Amaya at the factory.

Maria Julia Hernandez, director of the Archdiocese's Human Rights Office responsible for the investigation, said in a fall interview with the NLC that "There is tremendous fear among the workers at the Mandarin factory. The Chief of Personnel at the plant is a former army colonel. If you are aware of the history of El Salvador, you will understand that the workers are afraid, they don't want to speak for fear of losing their jobs. They know, if you don't obey you will be kicked out."

Even more telling is the repressive response with which recent attempts at unionisation by Mandarin workers have been met.

In January, 1995, women working at the Mandarin plant formed the Union of Workers of Mandarin International (SETMI), in the hope that they would be able to change poor working conditions.

As a result, SETMI members were locked-out of Mandarin, meaning they were paid but not allowed to enter the factory.

Since then, over 300 women have been illegally fired for trying to defend their rights.

According to an investigation of Mandarin conducted by the Salvadoran Human Rights office, not only were union members locked out and fired, but women who complained about factory abuses were also harassed and assaulted by Mandarin supervisors and guards.

### The Gap's double speak

It was the mass firing of employees which sparked the attention of the media this summer and led to a campaign to pressure the Gap to

Contined on page 22

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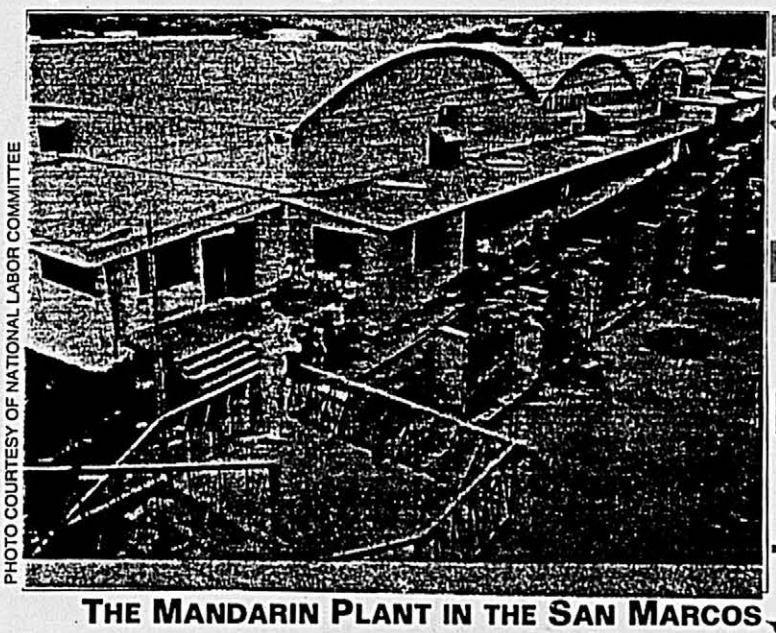

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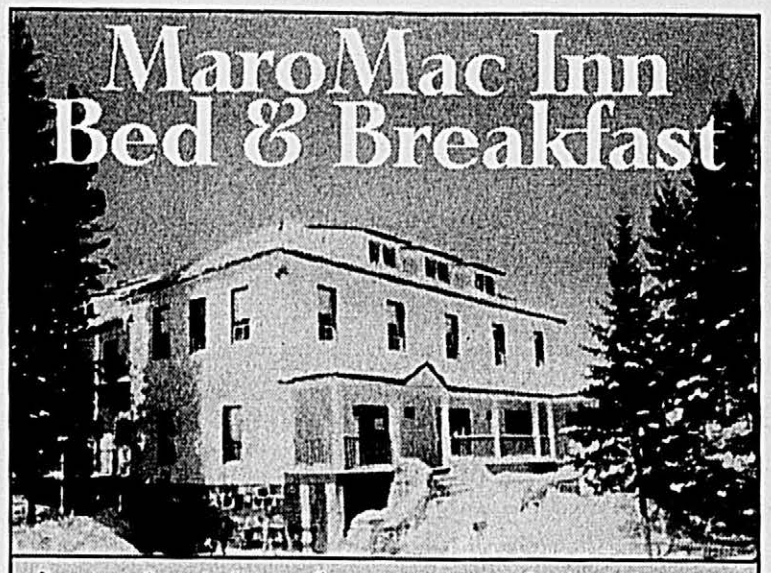

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# Funding goes up in smoke

## GROUPS FIGHT TOBACCO COMPANIES' FUNDING OF ARTS AND SPORTS

*by Anup Grewal*

Montréal is famed for its summer festivals. From the Montréal Jazz Festival, to the Just for Laughs Comedy Festival to the Festival of Films of the World to the Benson and Hedges International Fireworks, summertime in Montréal seems to be an ever-changing spectacle.

One thing is common to all of these events: They are all sponsored by tobacco companies.

Such sponsorships are more effective than any direct advertising campaign, and allow the tobacco industry to make a name for itself as a benefactor of sports and culture — all in exchange for a few posters and banners and a prominent place for their product at all festival venues.

However, non-smoking and health organisations around the world are beginning to voice their concern with the misuse of sponsorships by tobacco companies. For Heather Selin of Canada's Non-Smokers Rights Association, "Tobacco sponsorships are thinly veiled tobacco ads."

### Banned but not defeated

Cynthia Callard of Canada's Physicians for a Smoke Free Canada (PSC) says that for her group, tobacco sponsorships "have been of great concern."

In the late 1980s, the PSC launched a campaign against the sponsorship of the Canadian Ski Association by Export A, a brand name owned by RJR MacDonald. While the PSC failed to convince the Canadian Ski Association to forgo Export A's sponsorship, they did prompt the federal government to investigate the ethics of tobacco sponsorships in sports events.

The result was a law that withdrew an amount of government funds from any sports event equivalent to the amount sponsored by a tobacco company

Callard goes on to explain that loopholes in the legislation prevented the law from keeping the tobacco industry out of the sports sector for long. At the moment, public and tobacco sponsorships go hand in hand at events such as the du Maurier tennis championships and the Canadian Classic Golf tournament.

For Callard, this means "public funding is underwriting support for the tobacco industry."

In another attempt to curtail the harmful promotion of tobacco products, the Non-Smokers Rights Association lobbied the federal government in 1988 to create the Tobacco Products Control Act. This law banned all television, magazine, newspaper and billboard advertising, prohibited give aways and restricted brand name tobacco promotion of arts and sports events. The Supreme Court of Canada struck down the law in September of this year, saying it violated the right to free speech.

But according to Denis Coté of Québec's Info-tabac, the TPCA was not an effective law to begin with. He points to the fact that the fine for breaking TPCA regulations on sponsorships was only $10 000. "What does this mean to a big company like du Maurier?" asks Coté.

Selin explains the way in which tobacco companies sabotaged the weak points of the law right from the start. "Three days before the Act came into effect, the tobacco companies set up shell corporations like du Maurier Arts Ltd.," said Selin.

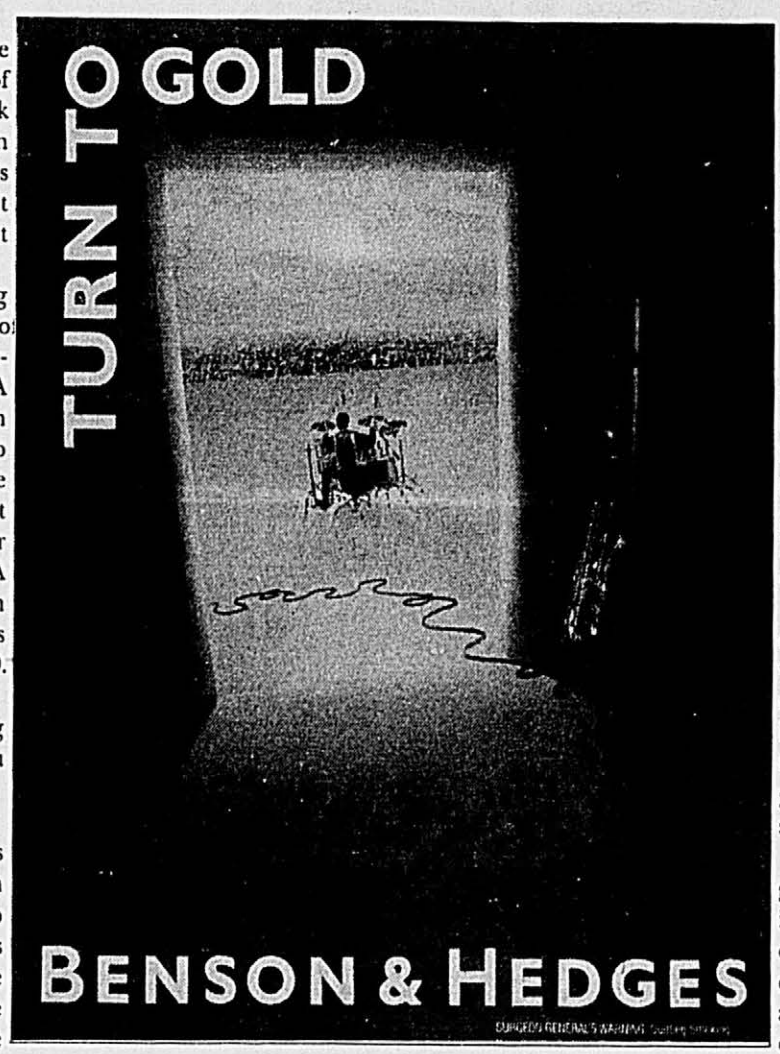
It is through these corporations that the tobacco industry reaches the arts and sports sectors and indirectly promotes their products. But there is nothing indirect about the advertising itself.

Coté says that "for every $1 a tobacco company spends on sponsorship, they spend five more on saying how good their product is."

### Crossing borders

While this type of advertising is a problem in Canada, tobacco companies extend themselves even further in the international market — especially in the newly independent former Soviet Republics, Eastern Europe, China and Southeast Asia.

In China, Phillip Morris, a U.S.-based tobacco corporation, spends thousands of dollars on programmes for the handicapped and the sports sector. It also sponsors the "Marlboro American Music Hour" in Beijing, as well as rock concerts in Canton and televised rock concerts in Hong Kong, where cigarette advertising is banned.




The March 1994 issue of *Multinational Monitor* reported that "foreign companies market and promote cigarettes... with expensive advertisements portraying healthy, attractive, wealthy, sporty and emancipated Western images. These are especially powerful for China's youth."

Dr. Chen Min Zhang, the Chinese health minister who in 1992 initiated China's first tobacco control act, criticised tobacco companies in a British documentary called *The Fragrant Smoke*. Chen, speaking about funding for sports, said "The tobacco companies are very cunning. Since they know they can't have direct advertising, they use deceit to get their commercials placed before the viewing audience."

Selin stresses the danger cigarette advertising poses for young people. "We know that advertising influences consumption. Very few smokers switch brands — given that, they [tobacco companies] need new consumers. Clearly they are going after the youth market."

*In Québec, 33 people die each day from tobacco related diseases.*

*"Tobacco sponsorships are thinly veiled tobacco ads."*
*— Heather Selin, Non-Smokers Rights Association*

*"Public funding is underwriting support for the tobacco industry."*
*— Cynthia Callard, Physicians For a Smoke-Free Canada.*

And what better way than through what is most important for the 15 to 35 age group: music, sports and the arts.

### The price is high

Selin says that the tobacco industry has used these sectors' popularity to lend legitimacy to their own efforts.

"The tobacco companies are very reluctant to do their own lobbying — so they get other groups to do it," says Selin.

"Sponsorships give the tobacco industry credibility. If they can get the arts and sports groups on their side because they [the arts and sports groups] need funding, then they have a legitimate sector on their side."

But what is the cost of this benevolent support?

One effect is that the tobacco company sponsoring an event often wants to influence other aspects of the event.

In this way, tobacco companies are no more benevolent than any other corporation; they are in it for themselves.

In an article written for *This Magazine*, Toronto musician Andrew Cash comments that "what lingers from all this is an after-taste of control. Far from being the independent purveyors of alternative culture — let alone the last line of defense against conformity and excessive consumption — the music community ends up beholden to corporate sponsors."

Other musicians, like Junkhouse's Tom Wilson, are not so worried about tobacco sponsorships — but there are limits. Wilson draws the line at his show appearing secondary to the tobacco company's promotional material. He says of the companies, "If you want to be involved in my show, then fine, but I don't feel like being involved in yours."

Examination of the way companies ,choose events for sponsorship, however, reveals the inevitability that athletes, models and artists end up promoting the products of their sponsors.

Coté says, "Publicity is very important to tobacco companies, because they have to sell an image. They never advertise the cigarette, only the lifestyle."

Matinée, for example, is a brand name of du Maurier known as a women's cigarette. It has sponsored the Matinée Ltd. Fashion Foundation and female golf tournaments.

### They're no lackeys.

It is important to consider exactly how much the tobacco industry gives to arts and sports. According to an Info-tabac document, the amount of money tobacco companies allot for sponsorships is less than what the government spends on research for tobacco related diseases and much less than what the government gives to the arts and sports sectors.

While the du Maurier Council for Arts gives $1.2 million to art programmes annually, the federal government gives about $5 billion.

Callard says depending on tobacco sponsorships "doesn't mean that the cultural and sports sectors in Canada are the lackeys of the tobacco companies. If they could say 'no' and still survive, they would."

Coté, on the other hand, believes people should remember that accepting sponsorship is a question of choices, because the sports and arts sectors can survive without tobacco funding.

Groups like Info-tabac, the NSRA and PSC are collaborating with others to create a new law that tobacco companies will not be able to circumvent.

Selin says that if the government will not ban tobacco advertising, it can at least force tobacco companies to pay for health ads. She says that this would "effectively kill advertising, because the tobacco companies know the effective consequences of health ads."

The real issue for people working in the anti-tobacco lobby, however, is that tobacco is a killer.

In Québec, 33 people die each day from tobacco related diseases, Coté points out.

"Look, if I gave a gun to the head of the Just for Laughs festival and said 'Kill 10 people and I will give you a million dollars,' he wouldn't do it. But people don't see the tobacco deaths because people are dying in the hospitals."

THE McGILL DAILY

CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

Thursday, December 7, 1995

CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

# Toward corporate responsibility

## *Taking a closer look at Ben and Jerry's and The Body Shop*

DAILY PHOTO BY DAVID RYTHER

**QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT THE BODY SHOP**

### Some examples of socially responsible practices by Ben & Jerry's and The Body Shop

#### Ben & Jerry's

- B&J's dairy waste, which is particularly difficult to break down, is pre-treated with "a dissolved air flotation system" which uses seaweed as a natural way to separate high-strength waste from waste water.
- The company has an in-house environmental resource library.
- The company has a Merry Mulching program in which people bring their Christmas trees to be chipped and turned into reusable mulch.
- According to Envirolink, 7.5 per cent of pre-tax profits are donated to The Ben & Jerry's Foundation.

#### The Body Shop

- The head office in Toronto is a 40-year-old "recycled" building that was purchased and then renovated with recycled components such as toilets, carpets and dry wall.
- The head office also provides daycare services for employees.
- The company encourages its stores to involve employees in a community service program. Staff members of the Place Ville Marie Body Shop, for example, participate in the Teenage Mothers Program at the Women's YMCA.
- The Body Shop holds national awareness campaigns, like the 1994-5 Violence Against Women Campaign, and acts in partnership with non-governmental organisations.

***by Dominique Nouvet***

At a time when businesses aggressively market themselves as the suppliers of "green" and "friendly" products, the concept of a truly socially responsible corporation remains elusive. To find the substance to this term, the *Daily* spoke with representatives of Ben & Jerry's and The Body Shop Canada, two of the companies most widely perceived as "socially responsible."

Alan Parker, investor relations and social auditing manager at Ben & Jerry's, stated that "It's a trap for any company to claim that it is uniquely socially responsible."

When asked for a general definition of the term, however, he proposed that a socially responsible corporation is "one that looks to create a safe and dignified workplace, that aggressively seeks to minimise its environmental impact... plays an active and positive role in its community... [and] produces products that are fundamentally useful and healthful."

Sean Quinn of The Body Shop Canada's head office in Toronto stressed the socially responsible corporation's integration of ethics into its operations. "Social responsibility is an ability to create a balance between profits and principles." Quinn went on to explain that for The Body Shop, this means having a "second bottom line."

"The first one [bottom line] is financial, while the second one is based on the firm's environmental and social impact," he said.

### Socially responsible shortfalls

Although companies like The Body Shop and Ben & Jerry's undertake projects such as waste recycling and workplace and community initiatives (see sidebar), they are also responsible for less favourable practices.

Parker pointed to examples of his company's shortfalls, such as violations of its waste-water permits.

The issue which sparked the greatest controversy around Ben & Jerry's was that of its "Rainforest Crunch" ice-cream and snacks. These Brazilian and cashew nut products were originally intended to benefit a Xapori cooperative nut supplier in Brazil. However, because the cooperative was unable to meet quantity demands, Ben and Jerry's has instead turned to commercial markets. According to a recent edition of *Report on Business*, these markets are "supplied by some of the most notorious antilabour agribusinesses in Latin America."

The magazine also states that the England-based Body Shop International (BSI) "has been known for exaggerating its progressive factors." It cites as a corporate giving rate which until 1994 was below average, a "Trade Not Aid" programme which amounted to .016 per cent of ingredient costs as well as the purchase of baskets from China, despite founder Anita Roddick's condemnation of trade with countries known for their human rights violations.

Despite such shortfalls, a more telling indicator of these companies' level of social responsibility is perhaps how they deal with these problems.

Ben & Jerry's social audits, are evidence of a desire for continual improvement. In fact, "much of the information which the media used about the Rainforest Crunch issue came from our own social performance report published last May," stated Parker.

The Body Shop also publishes evaluations of its operations. Having conducted annual environmental audits for the last three years, it plans to launch its first values report this January, which will include assessments of the firm's social and animal protection performances.

For Quinn, employees are also key in bringing improvements to the Body Shop. "Our staff is very demanding... they are our greatest bullshit detectors."

There has been a shortage of such behaviour among other corporations, prompting some to ask why more businesspeople do not agree with Parker's view that businesses should "use the resources at their command to increase the quality of life of people."

Quinn offered a possible explanation. "There seems to be a stumbling block... a lack of willingness to try? A lack of knowledge of how to do it?" He suggested that many corporations fear the higher costs entailed by social responsibility. Citing the Canadian Body Shop's recycled head office as an example, he said that in fact "you can actually save money" by acting responsibly.

> *"Our staff is very demanding... they are our greatest bullshit detectors."*
> *— Sean Quinn, The Body Shop Canada*

### Changing the corporate mentality?

There are some recent signs that industry is also beginning to adopt a more socially responsible approach to environmental concerns.

Jean-Pierre Martel, Forest Issues Director of the Association du Pâtes et Papiers du Québec, commented that "there have been more changes in our industry in the last 10 years than in the 20 preceding years."

"I think that there is a general trend of becoming pro-active," he stated.

The APPQ intends to establish an advisory committee that will include members of public and environmental organisations, similar to the one put in place by the provincial petrochemical association. The committee will discuss the problems facing the pulp and paper industry and assist in implementing plans for improvement.

Mining corporation Noranda Inc. also seems to be taking steps toward environmental reforms.

Frank Frantisak, the company's senior vice-president for the environment, cited the fact that the sulphur emissions from the company's smelter in the city of Noranda are being reduced well beyond the provincial requirements. He added that they will have been cut by 90 per cent by the year 2000.

One cannot help but question the motives for such changes, however. Frantisak stated that in Noranda's case, the move towards greater social responsibility was instigated by the corporation itself.

But Martel attributed part of the APPQ reforms to public and market pressure. "The environment is adding itself to the notion of competitiveness... certain markets are willing to pay a supplement [for "greener" products]."

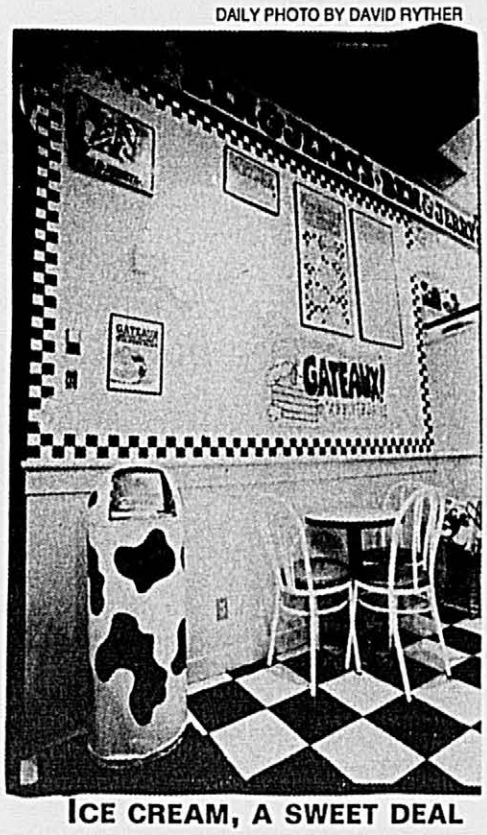
Incentive for reform can also be found in the fact that it is often cheaper for companies to establish their own methods for reducing pollution before they are obliged to conform to government standards.

The move toward corporate responsibility may also stem from a desire to prove that the legislative process need not dictate all behaviour. Frantisak commented, "The future is not in government laws. You cannot legislate everything under the sun."

While voluntary corporate approaches to social responsibility may be more effective than government intervention, consumers should be wary of assuming that such initiatives will suffice.

As Parker suggested, there is a collective responsibility to encourage corporate responsibility. "No burden of that size can ever be shared by only one group."

DAILY PHOTO BY DAVID RYTHER




**ICE CREAM, A SWEET DEAL FOR EMPLOYEES**

# Co-operation breeds better eating

## STUDENT CO-OPERATIVES ON CAMPUS

*By Roberta Laucke*

With the increasing popularity of the Architecture students' co-op cafeteria and QPIRG's LOAF co-op, more and more McGill students are looking to open up other co-operatives on and off campus.

Cynthia Chan, U2 student in Architecture, attributed the success of her faculty's co-op cafe to the students who run it. "We are students. We know what we like and what we don't like," she explained.

"The main thing is that we know everyone and are much more comfortable. It is a warmer atmosphere that does not force people to leave. There are sofas, magazines, good music.... It works because students have an interest in making it work," she added.

Located in the MacDonald Harrington Building, the co-op serves an assortment of homemade food. "We serve what students want to eat.... I eat here everyday," said Ana Policzer, a U2 Architecture student who works at the co-op.

"We serve two types of pasta everyday, one with meat and one vegetarian. We also serve muffins, sandwiches, lasagna, falafel, cookies, and danishes, and it's all homemade.

"It's not low-fat and it's not low-salt... [but] there's no butter and no mayonnaise [used]. Compared to other cafeterias, I think it's healthier," Policzer continued.

The foundation of the co-op began two years ago, when Architecture students renovated their cafeteria, transforming a lounge and adjoining office into a cozy café. They designed murals, painted tables and chairs, made wood floors and fixed the counters. During every Christmas break since then, students have added something new to the decor.

When the cafeteria first opened, it was small, serving only 200 students a day. The money generated was used for the Architecture banquet at the end of each year.

Last January, the Architecture students turned the café into a co-op, and expanded its resources to serve many students in Architecture and other faculties. This new influx of people has given the cafeteria enough money to provide good service at low cost.

"Now there is a lot of different food with good quality prices. Now we have more money than just for the banquet. We generate money and put 43 per~cent back into the cafeteria," said Guan Lee, U3 Architecture student and manager of the cafeteria.

### The co-op that should have been

Last March, McGill's Québec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG) was also granted the chance to run their own co-operative cafeteria in the Alley of the Shatner University Centre, but over the summer that opportunity was revoked.

The main idea of the project was for students to run a cafeteria providing responsible consumption and healthy, reasonably priced food services to other McGill students.

Although plans for the Alley were revoked, Sonja Kleiman, a QPIRG representative and head of the co-op cafeteria project in the Alley, is still searching for a venue near campus to house the co-operative cafeteria.

"The Alley is no longer an option. Now we are looking for another space around or on the edges just off campus.... We are definitely going ahead with plans," she said.

According to Kleiman, co-operative cafeterias are extremely beneficial because they provide a service other cafeterias do not.

"There are three main reasons for having a co-operative cafeteria. One, they keep the money on campus. They emphasise socially responsible consumption. They give hands-on experience to the people running [them] — the students get business experience in decision-making," she said.

Meanwhile, Kleiman continues to dedicate her time to looking for healthier and more nutritious ways of living for students.

Last month, Sonja and other members of QPIRG held a vegetarian food fair to see what people want to eat on campus. "We made it to see if people were interested in vegetarian food. We wanted to see what percentage of students eat on campus and what they eat. The response was great," said Kleiman.

QPIRG and other groups across campus are also working on another project entitled "Empowerment Week."

Scheduled to take place this February, different groups from across campus will demonstrate what services they provide for students through mini conferences, workshops and speakers. The objective of Empowerment Week is to see whether students eat nutritiously and where their interests lie.

### Responsible choices

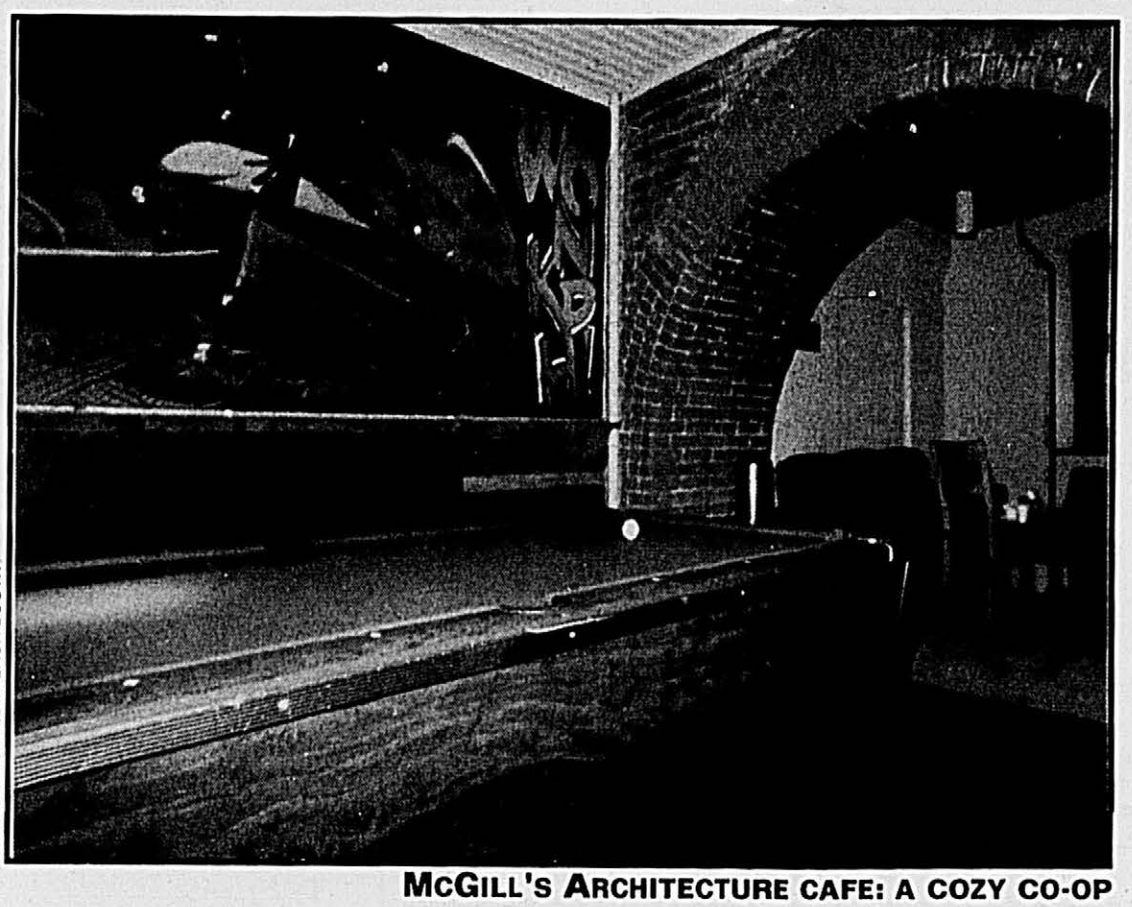
Another co-operative which has experienced great success in selling healthy and reasonably-priced food is the LOAF organic food co-op, which is also run by QPIRG coordinators and student volunteers.

LOAF operates by buying food from sources in the Montréal area such as club organic, terre à terre and bio dynamic. Every Monday, students order the food they want and to be picked up on Wednesday. The food is bought in bulk to keep the prices down.

Melanie Fearon, co-coordinator of LOAF, explained that the co-op lets students exercise their right to choose what they want to eat. "Students benefit by making ethical food choices. [Their choices] affect the market economy and the food market economy. They can separate themselves from something they do not agree with," she said.

"This is empowerment... They have the power to say 'no' and make their own choice," she concluded.

*To find out more information about LOAF, call 398-7432 or go to the QPIRG office, located at 3647 University. LOAF takes orders from 11h30 to 17h30 on Mondays; pick up is from 16h to 18h on Wednesdays. Some food items available for purchase include sweet carrots, fabulous leeks and whole wheat pasta.*



DAILY PHOTO BY CAMERON BOOTH

**McGILL'S ARCHITECTURE CAFE: A COZY CO-OP**

## GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, GOOD FOR STUDENTS

### Concordia's food co-operative Le Frigo Vert

*by Andrea Cooke*

Concordia students will soon be able to buy a lot of their groceries more cheaply when their new food co-operative opens its doors in January.

Originally known as the Eat Your Peel project, Concordia's Le Frigo Vert was founded in 1993 by Global Co-operation Network, a small buyers group from the Québec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia.

Next semester, Le Frigo Vert will start operating as a store, selling pasta, baked goods, local fruit and vegetables. Since the co-op is a non-profit organisation, organic food will be much cheaper than in regular stores.

"We started the co-op to encourage environmentally-sound food choices and provide more options for students," explained co-op manager Ki Namaste.

"Co-ops are useful because they provide a framework for communities to get together and organise themselves," she added, pointing out that co-operatives, by definition, allow people to work towards a common goal.

Le Frigo Vert will also promote environmentally and socially sound food choices.

"Since the co-op encourages environmentally sound food choices, Le Frigo Vert will sell organic food that has no pesticides or wax on them," Amaste explained.

Amaste added that the co-op will try to buy most of its food from alternative trade organisations, many of which, among other things, pay their labourers a fairer wage by giving them a greater proportion of the profits.

In the spring of 1994, Concordia students voted in a campus-wide referendum to extend co-op membership to all full time students. Each student will pay $1.70 per term to support the co-op.

Presently, McGill students are not eligible to join Concordia's co-op because they won't be contributing to the funding process. However, the co-op organisers are hoping to change this in the near future.

"We are looking to eventually set up a system where people [not just full-time Concordia students] can get a membership to the co-op.and therefore benefit from its services," Amaste stated.

*Le Frigo Vert will open its doors in January. For more information about the co-op, contact QPIRG Concordia at 848-7585.*

Thursday, December 7, 1995

# YOUR CONSUME

CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

# FROM BOYCOTT DON'T E TO BOYCOTTS

## An effective tool of consumer protest?

by Sonia Verma

The year was 1879, and English land owner Charles Cunningham Boycott had refused all requests from his tenants to reduce his rents by 25 per cent. The Land League, a tenants' organisation, retaliated, refusing continued relations with Boycott as a non-violent reaction to what they perceived as social injustice.

During the harvest season, Boycott was thus obliged to employ 50 workers from a nearby town, with an armed escort of 900 soldiers. The crops still failed however and the tenants triumphed. The "boycott" was successful.

Since that time, boycotts have been used in many different ways as tools of protest, but the main premise remains the same. Boycotts have become complex initiatives in a world where economic interdependence complicates factors involved in production

Speaking specifically of consumer boycotts, American researcher Monroe Friedman says they are used to "promote and protect the rights of the powerless and disenfranchised segments of society." The consumer refrains from making specific purchases in order to achieve certain political or social objectives.

. However, some activists, like François Tanguay of Greenpeace prefer to use boycotts as a "last-ditch effort" for social change.

"Boycotts are a very difficult thing to control... To be effective, you have to have a clear target company, be efficient at spreading the word and be ready to pursue the issue with energy," he says. Because boycotts have a tendency to lose momentum, Tanguay prefers politically oriented activism. He cites tactics of diplomacy or popular letter writing campaigns as preferable for affecting change.

But Elaine Lamy, executive director of Boston's INFACT, an organisation concerned with corporate responsibility, disagrees. She argues that it is the responsibility of the consumer, rather than the government to hold transnational corporations accountable for corporate practices. "We applaud efforts to hold companies accountable through the legislative process. But that, in some ways, says that companies can do whatever they want, that it is the government's responsibility to stop them. We do not believe that."

INFACT was a major player of the international boycott against Nestle products in the 1970s.

Both Tanguay and Lamy agree that the marketplace serves as a crucial extension of the democratic process. On the global economic stage, where transnational companies are important players and often act in concert with government, the boundaries between politics and economics have been blurred. Corporations, like governments, profoundly affect the lives of people and the environment. Consequently, the marketplace is an important forum where the voice of the consumer is clearly heard.

### An effective challenge

But the question remains, are boycotts the most effective consumer tool with which to change corporate policy? Because boycotts do not elicit uniform responses from all corporations, the answer is not clear

According to the magazine *Boycott Action News*, a boycott of Eddie Bauer was successful after the company announced in February that it will not renew its contract with its supplier in Burma. The Northwest Campaign for a Free Burma called the boycott to pressure Eddie Bauer to pull out of the country which is ruled by an oppressive military regime. It is hoped that the withdrawal of multinational corporations from Burma would deprive the government of foreign currency to support the regime.

On the other hand, recent international boycotts called against France have seemingly fallen on deaf ears. Jaques Chirac's government continues with its series of nuclear testing in the Polynesian islands despite consumer advocacy campaigns such as the boycott called against French wine and cheese.

Why are some boycotts successful while others fail? Mike Toye of McGill's QPRIG suggests that the difficulty lies in the boycott target. Corporations are much more economically linked to the consumer than governments. When consumers want to boycott a government, the actual target "company" is difficult to define.

Also, sometimes boycotts have unintended side-effects which penalise people who are not directly linked to the issue in question. "It may not be fair that some wine-maker in France is held accountable for a government which he might not have voted for," Toye points out.

Zachary Lyons, editor of Boycott Quarterly, a publication which updates the status of current boycotts, argues that boycotts are an effective means of expediting political change. He asserts that boycotts are a way of communicating to voting citizens, by saying "We don't like the way the government you put into office is doing business... you have no reason to expect us to buy what you sell."

This kind of political change relies on a ripple effect in the economy whereby if corporations or small businesses are unable to pay taxes or support the national economy, the government ultimately suffers. Social programmes may have to be cut and public support may dwindle.

It's an argument, however, which ignores the reality that boycotts are long term initiatives and rarely produce short-term effects, especially when governments are concerned.

Toye suggests that a possible re-focusing of consumer energy into supporting socially responsible corporations, rather than exclusively relying on boycotts, may be a practical solution to these difficulties.

But many critics say that ultimately, the responsibility lies with the consumer.

Lamy comments "As consumers who vote with their dollars every time we support these companies, we have a responsibility to ensure that the company behaves in a socially responsible manner."

### • Philip Morris Companies Inc. •

Products include: All Kraft products, Brim, Sanka and Maxwell House coffees, Cool Whip deserts, Miller and Lowenbrau beers, Malboro, Virginia Slims, Tang, Toblerone chocolates.

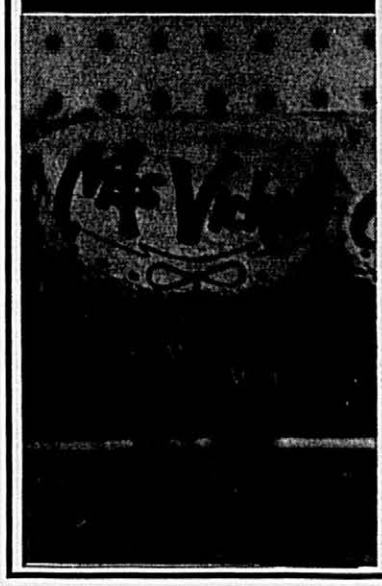
When the governments of Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand refused to allow the importation of Philip Morris cigarettes for sovereignty and health reasons, the huge multinational went directly to the United States government and invoked U.S. trade laws to force access to the countries' markets.

Boycott organisers claim that tobacco advertising and promotion by Philip Morris is reversing public health progress in many countries by promoting tobacco use. Today, these countries are effectively forced to import Philip Morris cigarettes. Despite the fact that cigarettes have been linked to fatal diseases by the Surgeon General, the company maintains that there is "no conclusive proof of a cause and effect relationship between cigarette smoking and chronic disease." Philip Morris was named as one of the 10 worst corporations of 1994 by the watchdog publication *Multinational Monitor*.

## Where your

### A look behind

by Hypatia Francis



**Pepsi** Pepsi Co. operates bottling plants in Burma which is currently controlled by an oppressive military dictatorship. Not only does Pepsi Co. exploit local labour, it also helps to financially sustain this regime. Pepsi has a contract with McGill University and, as a result, its vending machines can be found in most University buildings.

**Miss Vicky's Potato Chips** Miss Vicky's is a subsidiary of Pepsi Co. Miss Vicky's is sold in Shatner cafeteria, at Sadie's and other tabagies around McGill.

**Frito Lay** Also a subsidiary of Pepsi, Frito Lay chips are sold in vending machines around campus.

**Smartfood** It too is a subsidiary of Pepsi Co and is also sold on campus.

**Nestlé chocolate bars** Nestlé gained notoriety after a scandal involving baby food in several African and South Asian countries. Nestlé produces a baby food formula which is now illegal in the U.S. because it is addictive. But Nestlé still offers its formula to young mothers in hospitals in several countries, free of charge. The women are told that the formula is healthier than their own breast milk, so that they later have to buy the formula for their infants who are already addicted to it. Nestlé chocolate bars are sold at all of tabagies on campus and in many vending machines.

**Nescafé** Nescafé is a subsidiary of

# ER ACTION PAGE



CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

# EAT THIS LIST

## A beginner's guide to money well-kept

**• Mitsubishi Corporation •**

Products Include: Electronic equipment, Nikon camera equipment.

According to the Rainforest Action Network, the trading company allegedly imports tropical timber to Japan, contributing to the destruction of rainforest that belong to indigenous peoples. It also threatens endangered species

**• Walmart •**

Among other charges, Walmart is accused of supporting child labour in Bangladesh and sweat shops worldwide. Boycott organisers also emphasise the company's poor labour relations in North America. Walmart's expansion into small towns has effectively displaced local business, thereby limiting consumer choice.

**• Procter & Gamble •**

Products include: Hugo Boss, Incognito, Old Spice, Navy, Pantene, Head & Shoulders, Ivory, Cover Girl, Clarion, Vidal Sassoon, Cascade, Cheer, Bounce, Mr. Clean, Crest, Clearasil, Oil of Olay, Camay.

Proctor & Gamble continues to perform safety tests for its products on animals when these tests are not required by law. Boycott organisers In Defense of Animals claim that these tests are unnecessary when alternative, non-animal based tests exist.

**• Green Giant/Grand Metropolitan •**

Products include: Pillsbury baking products, Häagen-Dazs ice cream, Green Giant frozen foods, Absolut Vodka, Bailey's Irish Cream, Black Velvet, Bombay Dry Gin, Smirnoff Vodka.

Grand Metropolitan, owners of Pillsbury, Häagen-Dazs, Burger King and Green Giant, has moved hundreds of Green Giant union jobs from California to Mexico, where workers are poorly paid and environmental standards are less stringent.

**• McDonald's •**

McDonald's is the target of several international boycotts. The fast-food chain is charged with discriminatory payment procedures, paying up to a dollar less per hour to inner-city Philadelphia workers than it does to suburban ones. An international coalition is boycotting McDonald's until the company puts non-meat alternatives on the menus of all its restaurants.

**• Del Monte (Nabisco) •**

Products include: Bananas, Aylmer, Bits and Bites, Chips Ahoy, Christie, canned fruit, Oreos, Premium Plus, Ritz, Shredded Wheat, Shreddies, Triscuit, Teddy Grahams.

In 1973, seven banana producing countries formed the Union of Banana Exporting Countries (UBEC) in order to protect their share of export profits from multinationals like Del Monte. Guatemala was the first of the UBEC members to impose a $1 export tax per box of bananas in order to allow the government to benefit from Del Monte's success in exporting bananas from their country. Del Monte, managed to avoid the tax by reporting a decrease in exports. The government was unable to challenge the questionable report because Del Monte is responsible for Guatemala's export statistics. As well, banana plantations in Guatemala are notorious for their poor working conditions under which workers are often exposed to harmful pesticides banned in Canada and the United States.

**• Nike •**

According to *Multinational Monitor*, Nike earned a place in the 1994 "Corporate Hall of Shame" for questionable labour policies in the Asia-Pacific Region. *The Economist* claims that "a pair of Nike sports shoes that sells for $150 in the United States is made by Indonesian women paid the equivalent of 58 cents a day." Despite Nike's new Code of Conduct, activists investigating the company's practices in Asia claim that Nike has pursued a ruthless policy of cutting costs by compromising the interests of its workers and ignoring minimum wage standards.

**• Disney •**

Charging Disney with racism, sexism and anti-union policies, a coalition of groups including the National Hispanic Media Coalition and the California Peace and Freedom party have targeted the company with an international boycott. The first of several related boycotts charged Disney with practicing racist employment policies in its Imagineering division.

**• Adidas and Puma •**

Products include: Adidas and Puma shoes

These companies reportedly use the skin of threatened Australian kangaroos for shoe leather. The International Wildlife Coalition charges that these kangaroos are killed inhumanely and unnecessarily.

**• Coors Beer •**

The Coors Brewery is the target of a boycott by Animal Emancipation Inc. because of the brewery's extensive sponsorship of rodeos, which activists argue are cruel to animals.

**• Gillette Products •**

Products include: Braun Dry Idea, Imagine Body Spray, Right Guard, Soft & Dry, Tame, Liquid Paper, Paper Mate, Oral B, Sensor, Trac II razors.

Amy Morgan, spokesperson for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), claims that "for almost a decade, Gillette promised PETA and consumers that it is working to eliminate animal tests, yet the company still smears substances in rabbits' eyes, invokes lethal limit tests and each year subjects hundreds of animals to unnecessary and cruel procedures."

**• Blockbuster Video •**

The video chain is charged by a variety of anti-censorship organisations with refusing to carry videos in its stores which company executives deem offensive.

**• Pizza Hut •**

Pizza Hut is using Rush Limbaugh as a spokesperson in its television advertising campaign. Opponents have charged the radio talk-show host with "hate-mongering." Organisers argue that the most effective way to boycott the radio personality is by boycotting companies that he endorses.

**• Celestial Seasonings Tea •**

An international boycott has been called against Celestial Seasonings because the company is owned by a Ku Klux Klan member.

**• Snapple Beverages •**

The Association on American Indian Affairs claims that Snapple's use of a historic painting of the Boston Tea Party on its iced tea bottles perpetuates an image of "savage indians," upon which hundreds of years of oppression and prejudice have been based.

**• French Cheese and Wine •**

Including Beaujolais, Nouveau, Champagne, Chablis and Burgundy.

Continued French nuclear testing in the Polynesian Islands, justified on the grounds of "national security," has prompted an international boycott against major French exports. Tests in the Muroa atoll have not only harmed the environment, but the health of the region's indigenous population. Greenpeace and The Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility call the tests military arrogance. According to *The Boycott Quarterly*, the president of the French wine exporters' association, Jean-Marie Chadronnier, said anti-nuclear boycotts seem to be hurting French wine sales. "Every day we get new reports that this retail chain has canceled an order, or that restaurant has taken French wines off its list."

*Sources: Boycott Quarterly, Boycott Action News, and QPIRG-published Hungry for Justice*

## loonie goes

### l vending machine brand names

Nestlé. Its hot chocolate and coffee is sold in several vending machines on campus, including the one in Shatner.

**Papermate pens** Papermate is a subsidiary of Gillette. All Gillette products are tested on animals, both on their eyes and skin. Although there are other ways to test these products, Gillette has so far not made use of them. These tests result in blindness, illness and often death. Papermate pens are sold at the campus tabagies and at the McGill Bookstore.

**Liquid Paper** Liquid Paper is also a subsidiary of Gillette. Like Papermate products, Liquid Paper is sold at the Bookstore and in the tabagies.

**Mead notebooks** Mead is a company which makes use of animal testing. Its notebooks are sold both at the McGill Bookstore and in the campus tabagies.

The above list is by no means a complete one. Both QPIRG (Québec Interest Research Group) and META (McGill students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) can provide concerned students with information on ethical consumerism. These groups can help you find alternatives to products which involve deforestation, inhumane working conditions or cruelty to animals. It is possible to be an ethical consumer without it costing too much.

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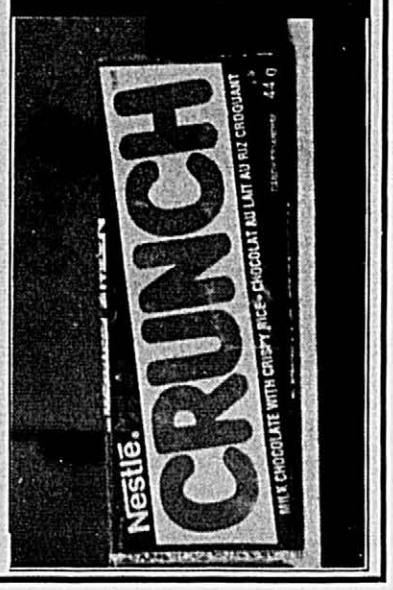

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CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

# More than just a restaurant

## SANTROPOL ROULANT SERVES HOT FOOD TO ELDERLY MONTREALERS

*By Bronwen Gillespie and Kate Gibson*

Santropol is a name that is known by many McGill students. With its fruit-laden café au laits, creative decor and delicious food, the restaurant is a popular spot. What many don't know, however, is that since May, the volunteers of nearby Santropol Roulant have been helping to deliver home-cooked food to Montrealers in need.

Late spring, Keith Fitzpatrick and Christopher Todsall opened their new venture, Santropol Roulant. Their desire was to serve as many meals as possible to people in need in the Montréal area. "Food is to be celebrated; it is more than a meal, even if it's a simple cream cheese sandwich," Fitzpatrick, a former Santropol employee said.

Fitzpatrick credits Santropol for guidance, and for the donation of a kitchen and the necessary equipment. This year, the one per cent of profit that Santropol reserves for charity is helping to support this new Meals On Wheels venture, a programme designed to deliver food to those who do not have the means to get it themselves

Youth Services Canada, a branch of Human Resources and Development Canada, contributed a $500 float to get the Santropol Roulant project off the ground. Youth Services is a government-sponsored program aimed at getting young people involved in community service. The organisation covers electricity and rent, and pays a stipend to 20 workers at Santropol Roulant. "In this sense, Santropol Roulant is a multi-tiered organisation. As well as providing a meal service, it creates a venue in which Youth Services Canada participants can work," Fitzpatrick explained.

Santropol Roulant works in partnership with other Meals On Wheels agencies in the Montréal area. Though affiliated with the Volunteer Bureau, all Meals On Wheels programmes are autonomous. Food costs are covered by the standard $3 meal price and most work is on a volunteer basis.

Since its establishment in Montréal in 1966, the Meals On Wheels programme has rapidly expanded and now includes 73 groups, serving more than 200 000 meals to 1 600 clients. The majority of the clients are elderly and, for many, the prepared meals they receive are essential, enabling them to live independently.

The Meals on Wheels delivery is a multi-purposed service: It provides a hot meal, basic surveillance and much needed human contact to people living alone or those unable to leave their homes.

Eva Mask, the coordinator of the Montréal Meals On Wheels programme, explained that the service helps to prolong the independence of the elderly, keeping them out of hospital and public institutions.

As the average overhead cost for a patient in hospital is as much as $300 a day, Meals On Wheels represents a substantial savings for the provincial government. The Meals On Wheels programme receives $90 000 annual in government funds with an additional $20 000 allocated to groups in financial difficulty.

Volunteers, mostly between 50 and 70 years old, work alongside students from local CEGEP's, secondary schools and universities in delivering the food.

Of the Santropol-Roulant project, May was very enthusiastic. "It is one of our prize programs. Their agency is very well run and the staff are very dedicated," May said.

One of the unique things about Santropol Roulant is that while most Meals on Wheels initiatives rely on vans and cars for delivery, Santropol volunteers try to use bicycles when they can.

David Orock, a 95 year-old subscriber to Meals On Wheels is very pleased with the programme. Since 1988, when he started using the service, he has come to enjoy and look forward to the bi-weekly visits of the volunteers. "I don't get too many visitors, you see, so I like to speak to the young people when they come. It helps to pass the day," Orock explained.

Now that winter has arrived, the demand for food service has increased as the snow isolates elderly people in their homes. "Calls are coming in as people spread the word, and we get referrals from nurses and community clinics," Fitzpatrick said.

As well as the elderly, families in low budget housing areas are pleased to receive the service. "Huge relief is often displayed by the clients. Volunteers are hugged and tears even flow." Fitzpatrick added. Fitzpatrick invites any interested individuals to get involved, as help is especially needed in the winter months.

*For more information on how to get involved with Santropol Roulant, call Keith at 284 9335*

DAILY PHOTO BY DAVID RYTHER

SANTROPOL ROULANT HEADQUARTERS

# A DIFFERENT FACE ON PUBLISHING

## Black Rose Books' social mandate

*by Kevin Siu*

As a prominent activist in the late 1960s, Dimitrios Roussopoulos was approached by a commercial publisher in Toronto to write a book about the "new Left" in Canada. He agreed and submitted a manuscript, anticipating quick publication due to what he believed was the timely and relevant nature of the book.

However, dissatisfied with the lengthy, often tedious process involved in publishing a book, Roussopoulos began to consider other avenues. "Out of frustration and annoyance I started talking to my friends. We put together $900 and we published that book ourselves."

The success of his book (three printings totaling 8 000 copies) prompted Roussopoulos to consider a publishing project in earnest. In 1970, he founded Black Rose Books, a non-profit project interested in publishing ideas and analyses that are generally ignored by commercial firms.

Since its inception, Black Rose Books' attempt to bring emerging social movements and thought to public attention has led to the publication of over 300 works, by authors such as Noam Chomsky, George Woodcock, Marguerite Mendell and Murray Bookchin. The publications are distributed throughout North America and internationally.

The common approach and principles of those involved with Black Rose Books have led to arrangements unusual for a publishing company. First, Black Rose Books uses the financial surplus generated by the commercially successful books to standardise prices of all books, regardless of the book's length or commercial viability. Secondly, the financial arrangement between Black Rose Books and its authors varies according to need.

"Most of our authors donate their royalties back to Black Rose Books," Roussopoulos explains. "We couldn't survive otherwise. For example, Bookchin and Chomsky have never received a cent from Black Rose. They gladly donate everything back. And our [basic] agreement is, in most cases, that people who live by writing, whose main source of revenue is writing — professional writers, if you will — those people we will support the best we can. A person who has another job, generally speaking, is willing to donate their royalties." This recognition of co-operative advantages gives Black Rose Books the flexibility to publish lesser-known writers and works that may not sell in large quantities.

However, the main advantage of Black Rose Books over commercial publishing firms is that, because profit is not the driving concern, it can evaluate books on their critical, rather than commercial, merits.

One recent example is *The Trojan Horse: Alberta and the Future of Canada*, an anthology of essays analysing the present and future implications of the actions of Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's government. When looking for a publisher, the book's editors approached several publishing firms. Because anthologies are considered a risky financial investment in the publishing industry, only Black Rose Books expressed serious interest.

*The Trojan Horse*'s has attracted attention throughout Alberta since it was published in September. "Because the critique is so well done, even the commercial media have given it serious and even 'sympathetic' attention — the Edmonton *Journal* has given it a full page, the Calgary *Herald* has given it a full page," Roussopoulos explains.

"And the reason why it got such attention from the commercial media is because it's the first serious critique of the Klein government and the fact that it came from the left was incidental," he continues.

Roussopoulos acknowledges that the primary interest of turning profit does not always prevent commercial firms from adopting a social agenda. "General Publishing, for example, has published two of the most devastating critiques of the Mulroney years"

"That's a publisher," he notes "who is very commercial, very bottom-line, but is also very nationalistic, so they want to publish certain kinds of books. They also obviously evaluated that those two books would be commercially successful, and they have been commercially successful."

By circumventing the uneasy marriage of profit-seeking and affecting social change, Black Rose Books is able to maintain what Roussopoulos calls a "long interest." This interest extends itself beyond simply promoting a book and its writer; it is a commitment to promoting ideas, discussion and action.

Black Rose Books is presently organising a cross-Canada speaking tour for the editors of *The Trojan Horse*. Roussopoulos hopes that the tour will raise interest in the book's analyses, particularly in Ontario where the Harris government is taking many measures similar to the Klein government.

Other upcoming projects for Black Rose Books include a new book by Noam Chomsky to be released in March. An international project, it will be published in conjunction with an Australian, American, and British publisher. Also planned for publication in the new year is *Beyond O.J.* by American writer Earl Hutchison. A critical, non-sensational analysis of the issues that arose before, during, and after the O.J. trial, the book will look at "the O.J. phenomenon from the point of view of race and the point of view of class in American society."

After 25 years, Black Rose continues to perservere. "We know that the forces of the marketplace are against publishing of this kind," Roussopoulos points out. "But I think we are well-organised enough and serious enough to be able to establish a presence in bookstores and in libraries and place our books in the hands of many individuals in many different places."

20 → $

CORPORATE AND CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY

# ALTERNATIVE TRADE

## Bridgehead gives producers a fair shake

*by Jacqueline Reis*

Bridgehead has been in the business of selling cultural products for the past 10 years. As the trading arm of Oxfam-Canada since 1985, the company has a mandate to use trade as a mechanism for development. Whether a Western organisation can itself promote "development" in another culture is debatable, but Bridgehead seems to be working towards a balance between assistance and imposition with its producers.

As an alternative trade corporation, Bridgehead sells food, clothing and gifts made by small producer groups from Canada and overseas at a price which can earn the makers a fair profit.

"The general principle is that we're into a long-term partnership with a producer. The idea is that that producer has certain skills and certain resources, and we try to maximise those by working on a fair trade basis," said Howard Esbin, managing director of Bridgehead.

"The fact of the matter is, the long-term vision is for them to be independent, to stand on their own. But in order for them to do that, a partnership is needed, just because the odds... are so stacked against them," said Esbin.

This partnership includes giving producers a 50 per cent advance on orders, a practice Esbin said is "unheard of in business."

He explained that such advances are necessary because of the difficulties producers face in buying raw materials and shipping goods.

The organisation also seems committed to profit sharing with its producers, perhaps to the detriment of Bridgehead's central office itself.

"Prior to '94 and the five years or four years previous, we probably [made] $200 000 to $300 000 in profits," said Esbin. "At that time we didn't keep any for ourselves," he added, noting that may have been a bad idea.

"I have to say that this year has been a very tough year. The economy in Canada has not been very buoyant," he commented.

"Our biggest cost apart from inventory is fixed staff, so we've had to lay off some people for '96, but we meet all our commitments to our producer partners. All 90 partners are already paid," he concluded.

**Where in the world do you want to be today?**

### Food for thought

According to one of Bridgehead's "Food for Thought" newsletters, the members of Esperanza, a coffee producer that has worked with Bridgehead, have learned a lot through alternative trade organisations.

Rufino Herrera Puello, a member of Esperanza, wrote that after Esperanza's first export operation, "we lost our fear of the big export mystery and we began to train ourselves with the help of knowledgeable people to understand the tricks involved in the whole process."

He continued, writing "So for us our relationships with alternative traders has become a complete training school, an apprenticeship which has been useful not only for alternative trading but also to compete with speed and a certain efficiency in our operations with the normal market."

While it may not be a far leap for coffee producers to sell to a different trading group, artisan groups may need to be taught the skills necessary to create marketable products.

In other words, the products produced by indigenous groups may not necessarily be indigenous to their culture.

"Essentially, entrepreneurship and trading are universal phenomena and are integral to every culture," said Esbin. "People know how to trade, therefore the issue becomes... is one interested in making projects that are external to one's culture?"

Referring to the cultural interference which sometimes arises in development projects, Esbin admitted that "There is some learning," but could not say who decided what was taught or who teaches it.

"I don't think there's an over-arching kind of rationale [as to what's taught]. It's much more pragmatic. You start with a base of product, you see what [it earns]." And then, he added, you change it if necessary.

Geraldo Marques, trade manager at Cultural Survival Inc. of Cambridge, Mass., said that many alternative trade organisations do not get involved in the day-to-day operations of producer workshops.

"Usually, we try not to get too involved in everyday aspects of management," said Marques. "It's very, very hard to even try to manage a cooperative from 10 000 miles away."

Cultural Survival is a small "intellectual grassroots" organisation that seeks to preserve indigenous cultures, explained co-founder Pia Maybury-Lewis. The non-profit group employs about 10 full-time employees and as many volunteer interns to work on projects including alternative trading, school curriculum and *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, their publication.

Many of the clothes and gifts sold by Bridgehead and other alternative trade organisations have a distinctly "ethnic" look, a look that not only commodifies non-Western culture but that, like any other trend, will only last so long.

"The market is changing for some of the products. In other words, ethnicity, per say, cannot sustain itself as a selling point," said Esbin. "In many ways, we have a department store approach, and certain categories rise, and certain product categories fall."

He described Bridgehead's target group as university-educated women, "probably in the baby boom category." The buying trends of this market are relatively elastic, especially for gift items.

But Esbin did not appear worried.

"The thing about [the producers] being in this kind of situation is it breeds ingenuity... and one of the universal traits that people adopt is diversification," he said. "They try to roll with the punches."

He added that some groups can adapt more easily than others to changes in the marketplace, due to their size, products and ability to sell through other channels.

### Walking their talk

"Clearly it's one thing to talk principles. It's another thing to act [on] principles," said David Nitkin, president and founder of EthicScan, a small Toronto-based company that investigates the environmental and labour practices of other companies.

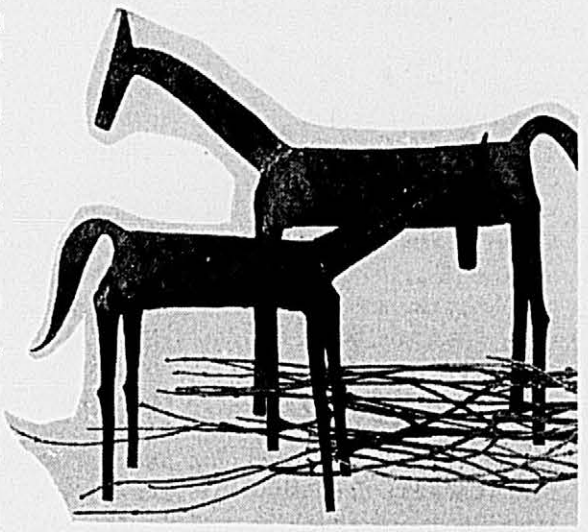
"There is a perception that there are an awful lot of not-for-profits that are not walking their talk," he added.

Nitkin says that Bridgehead applied their commitment to environmental and labour-friendly policies to their own procurement practices, as well as to the practices of their producer groups.

After hearing that one of their printers' policies was questionable, Bridgehead contacted EthicScan and asked them to investigate the printer, said Nitkin.

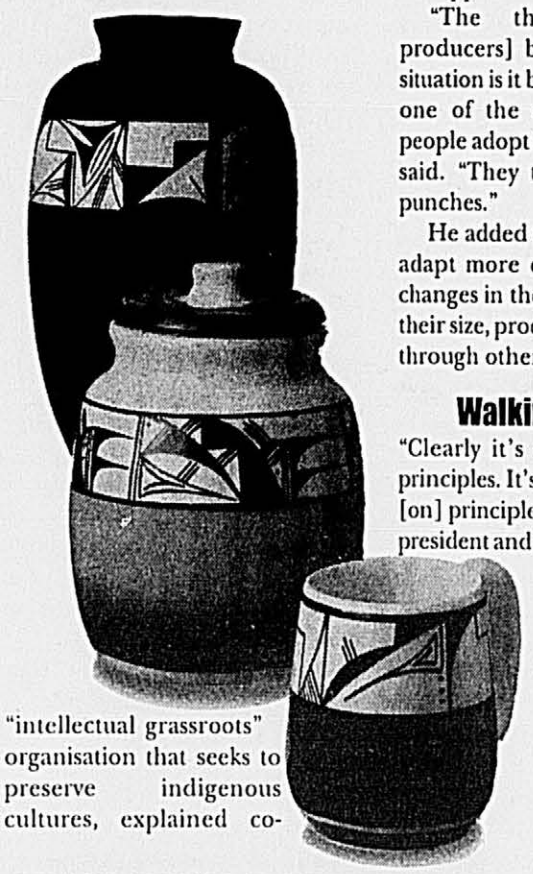
"We quickly determined that the printer... not only had a serious environmental problem, but also had a problem with morale, particularly with its treatment of women employees," Nitkin explained.

He went on to say that rather than move the $150 000 contract to another printer, Bridgehead convinced the first contractor to improve their business practices.



"This one story is a nice little anecdote of the social commitment that Bridgehead has, and also that the company has the courage of its convictions," Nitkin concluded. He added, however, that he has no knowledge of Bridgehead's other practices and has not investigated the printer since that time.

Bridgehead's impact cannot be neatly summarised. Esbin stated that "If this network wasn't there, I could tell you what they [would be] doing, because I lived in East Africa, and they would be sitting there unemployed." The "they" Esbin referred to, he explained, were highly educated people without employment opportunities, the people who Bridgehead can help employ. It remains to be seen, however, whether such jobs will fulfill people's abilities and needs without usurping a culture in the name of marketing and profits.



# Toying with workers lives

## ASIAN TOY FACTORIES TARGETED FOR POOR CONDITIONS

*by Lexi Garland*

In May 1995, after years of discussions and meetings, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions made a concrete advance in their advocacy of workers' rights with the creation of a plan to battle inadequate working conditions.

Members of the ICFTU, an umbrella group of organisations and unions which meet to discuss trade-related issues, agreed to undertake a campaign against inhumane treatment of factory workers in Asia, where the majority of the world's toy factories are located. Smaller organisations, such as the Canadian Labour Congress and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), are following ICFTU's lead and co-organising a campaign of their own.

According to a press release from the Canadian Labour Congress, the campaign is expected to "cover a period of three or four years and at some point it will likely involve the boycotting of toys from companies which have been specifically targeted."

The campaign was spurred in part by the May 1993 Kader factory fire in Thailand. NAC President Sunera Thobani agreed that the Kader fire precipitated the campaign, but it is the poor working conditions of these companies which has put it into full gear.

The Kader fire set a new record of factory-fire related deaths, resulting in a greater loss of life than the 1911 fire in the New York Triangle Shirtwaist Company which killed 146 workers. The New York fire resulted in a similar campaign to implement more rigorous health and safety standards in U.S. factories. Advocates for factory workers' safety hope to do the same in Asia.

### Policies feed exploitation

The Kader Industrial Toy Company, located near Bangkok, was a subcontractor for major foreign-owned toy companies. The 1993 fire there killed 188 workers and injured 469.

The Bangkok area is home to thousands of factories like Kader that were established through the Thai government's efforts to attract foreign investment.

Although the products vary, all plants rely on a large supply of Thai workers — mainly women — who migrate to Bangkok from economically depressed rural regions in search of work.

The Thai government's rural development policies have combined with a lack of regulatory and enforcement measures to maintain the steady flow of cheap labour that keeps foreign investors satisfied.

Unfortunately for the Thai government, however, these lax safety standards can lead to tragedies such as the one at Kader, that expose the fundamental flaws of the system.

One ICFTU publication reveals that there were no sprinkler systems in the Kader factory, and the fire alarms were out of order. Inadequate fire exits and stairways and doors and windows locked against theft all prevented victims from escaping the tragedy.

**The Thai government's rural development policies have combined with a lack of regulatory and enforcement measures to maintain the steady flow of cheap labour that keeps foreign investors satisfied**

### Indentured labour

The Kader fire is just one example of how many workers lose their lives or are injured in the production of toys for North American consumers. The CLC hopes to use this point to raise consumer awareness.

Paul Puritt, national representative of the CLC, noted that, "especially at this time of the year, no one wants to buy a toy made by a child exploited in the process. It ruins your gift of love."

NAC echoed this idea in a recent memorandum: "The Holiday season is normally for celebration and gift giving. Unfortunately, the toys that we buy for our children are made under extremely dangerous and harmful conditions."

Describing consumers' reaction to the terrible conditions behind toy production, Thobani said, "It horrifies people to hear this."

Children as young as 13 often work in such factories. Of the 174 women killed in the Kader fire, many were approximately 13 years old. As part-time workers trying to make money during their school breaks, they had been told that they were not entitled to minimum wage or social benefits. The current minimum wage for the Bangkok area is Baht 125 (U.S. $5.52) a day, which for many begins at eight and ends at five. But most workers stay late to earn $.84 cents for each additional hour simply to cover living expenses.

Seventy per cent of toys made in Asian factories like the Kader Factory are bought in Canada and the U.S. Thousands of young women are abused, if not killed, in making the toys sold in North American stores. They are often prevented from using the washroom and subjected to daily body searches to check for stolen items. They are also locked inside the factories at night to further protect against theft.

Thobani explains that incidents like the Kader fire "are the extreme ends of what happens. Women are being locked in tiny cages, or threatened to if they don't comply with their employers. The only word I can use is indentured workers."

**As part-time workers trying to make money during their school breaks, they had been told that they were not entitled to minimum wage or social benefits.**

### The North American connection

The CLC and NAC hope to raise consumer's awareness of these issues. Campaign representatives are writing to industry leaders such as Disney, Hasbro, Fisher Price, Mattel and Tyco to ask them to meet and discuss and adopt an international charter for the safe production of toys.

Thobani explains that their "aim is to raise awareness of conditions under which toys are produced and to send a message to the manufacturers that people don't want to buy toys which cost the lives of workers."

A sample letter to manufacturers states that "people do not want to buy toys that they fear are made at a great cost in terms of human life, suffering and dignity." The letter also demands that the toy industry comply to a proposed international code of conduct called the Charter on the Safe Production of Toys.

The Charter was drawn up by Hong Kong-based unions and is in keeping with existing international law. The document calls for the creation of adequate fire exits and at least one day of rest per week. It also demands an end to over-time, and end to physical and psychological oppression as well as a lifting of restrictions on workers' efforts to unionise. Finally, the Charter calls for the monitoring and enforcement of its imperatives by an autonomous committee.

According to Puritt, Canadian and U.S. toy companies are open to discussing such a code but fail incorporate freedom of association or enforcement in their proposals.

Although international and domestic legislation is in place to govern factory conditions, employers are nonetheless free to lay off workers who are on strike and hire new ones to replace them. Nor are employers required to receive official authorisation before penalising workers or union officers for attempting to organise.

Puritt adds that the companies "are talking to us [CLC leaders] now, since we are near Christmas, because they don't want boycotts."

Thobani, however, emphasises that "most of these companies haven't taken us seriously." She describes the toy companies as in denial, rationalising their refusal to support the Charter by claiming that their practices are safe.

**"especially at this time of the year, no one wants to buy a toy made by a child exploited in the process. It ruins your gift of love." — Paul Puritt, national representative of the CLC.**

### Holding their fire

Organisers have yet to call for an official boycott, however, and plan to wait until after the Toy Fair in Hong Kong next January. They plan to propose the Charter at that time and see who is willing to sign and who is not. This will give them a better idea of which companies they will need to target in an eventual boycott.

The CLC says it will not call a boycott if they cannot enforce it, which is the case at this time. Puritt explains that "we don't call them [boycotts] unless the people who are working want them. A boycott isn't a message sent down from some high office. They [the workers] have to call them."

Feedback on the campaign has been intense so far, with horrified and shocked people quick to offer their help. Now that consumer interest has been aroused, the CLC and NAC can move onto the next phase of their campaign: personal appeals to toy companies.

Both organisations are asking people to join in the letter-writing campaigns to companies like Disney, Hasbro, Tyco and Mattel.

The campaign awaits the Toy Fair to jar other industry leaders out of denial. Until then, research into the practices of toy factories continues in anticipation of the campaign ahead.

DAILY GRAPHIC BY MAX FRANCISCO

Continued from page 11

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY RESPONSIBILITY

# THE GAP

clean up the conditions in its subcontracting factories, namely Mandarin International.

Among the demands made by the ex-workers themselves, as well as solidarity groups in the U.S. and Canada, was the immediate reinstatement and compensation of the locked-out and fired employees. Campaign organisers also demanded the demilitarisation of the factory.

The Gap was asked to guarantee that Mandarin recognise the SETMI union, and commit itself to an independent third party to monitor contractors' compliance with the Gap's code of conduct.

When the company-led investigation came up with a clean slate, critics also demanded that the Gap initiate another, joint investigation with the NLC.

After a few months of denying the allegations and looking into the situation further, the Gap ignored these suggestions but pulled-out of Mandarin. Explaining this decisions, a company letter states it will return to El Salvador only if Mandarin and the government convince the company that factory conditions are satisfactory.

Critics point out that that is an odd response for a company that didn't find anything wrong. Jacques Bertrand of the Canadian Catholic Organisation for Development and Peace says the Gap's decision to leave El Salvador seems "to be blaming Mandarin. So they're admitting their investigation was flawed."

Bertrand also says the decision shows the Gap is "fleeing from the problem." He adds that the problems at the Mandarin factory are not isolated. "I'm sure you wouldn't have to do much research to find similar problems at other factories," he said, adding that the Gap's decision was "very disappointing."

Ladd echoes this, noting that the Gap will probably just replace Mandarin with another factory that has similar problems.

"Instead of making the management adhere to human rights and a code of conduct... they're basically running toward other maquiladoras," Ladd said.

## Not an isolated case

It is exactly because the conditions at the Mandarin factory are more than an isolated case that critics say the Gap should stay and change them.

Noting the widespread problems of enforcing company codes of conduct in subcontracting factories, critics say the Gap should not only take responsibility for Mandarin practices, but also provide a model for remedying them.

One common suggestion is the establishment of an independent monitoring body, which would report on whether a company's code of conduct was being followed. Employees could bring their grievances to this body, rather than having to face management itself.

Bertrand — who is organising a campaign against Nike and Levi Strauss for employee mistreatment similar to Mandarin's — and Ladd both agree that a monitoring body could be made up of human rights, church and labour groups and funded by the companies themselves.

Noting the conflict of interest in the current monitoring system of plants like Mandarin, Bertrand says "The big problem with monitoring is there's not one person taking care of complaints; you have production managers overseeing human rights allegations."

## Where the workers stand

The demonstrations being organised against the Gap aim at re-focusing public attention not only on the abuses occurring in the Mandarin plant itself, but also on the responsibility the Gap has in working to end them.

Critics say that the Gap's decision sends a clear message about what the company thinks of workers' rights.

The decision to leave Mandarin, critics say, harms workers more than it helps them.

Ladd commented that although the Mandarin jobs are bad, the women workers who unionised were hoping to make them better. Instead, they have been forced to give up their employment entirely.

"That was not what people wanted," Ladd said.

"[The Gap's action] sets an international bad precedent whereby any worker who wants to stand up and fight for their rights will lose their jobs," Cook commented.

Ladd agrees. "They're trying to send a clear message to other workers in El Salvador that if you try to improve your conditions and bring media attention to them, they [jobs] will not be there any more." She adds this will make it "more difficult for people to feel they have the right to speak out."

Despite the Gap's unwillingness to meet the suggestions made by union organisers, letter writers and ex-Mandarin workers, the campaign to raise awareness about the Gap does not seem to be fading.

In fact, Cook notes that the attention of university students — who make up a huge share of the Gap's market — has reached a peak.

As the Christmas buying season approaches, both U.S. and Canadian campaign organisers will likely keep up the heat against the Gap.

"Ultimately we hope they agree to go back to El Salvador and work with these companies about codes of conduct," Cook says.

A national study released this week by the Ontario District UNITE suggests that if nothing else, shoppers will at least be interested in hearing the campaign's demands. According to the study, respondents indicated they would use their consumer power to help effect change in working conditions if they knew how.

"A high percentage of people said if they knew about the working conditions in a particular store, they'd change to use their consumer power in a positive way," Ladd said.

# Ban postponed due to Cree efforts

*by M-J Milloy*

The European Parliament has recently agreed to give Canada another one-year extension before it imposes a ban on all fur imports.

Both federal and provincial representatives recently traveled to Europe to lobby the Parliament to again postpone the ban, first passed in 1991.

But the success of the ban's postponement was due largely to the efforts of representatives of the Cree Nation.

Fur trapped in Canada is worth almost $50 million, and almost three-quarters of that total is sold in Europe. Aboriginal people trap about half of the total fur trapped in Canada.

In recent years, animal rights activists in Europe and North America have lobbied the European Parliament to ban trade in furs.

Kenny Blackstone, deputy grand chief of the Cree, is unconvinced by the attempts of the animal rights activists.

"Our recent history, defending our land against loggers and hydro developers, should show our concern and respect for the land and all its inhabitants," he said.

Beyond fur's economic value to Cree trappers, it is a central part of Cree culture and society.

Over 70 per cent of the trapped animals are also used for food, which helps to offset the high costs of importing food from the south.

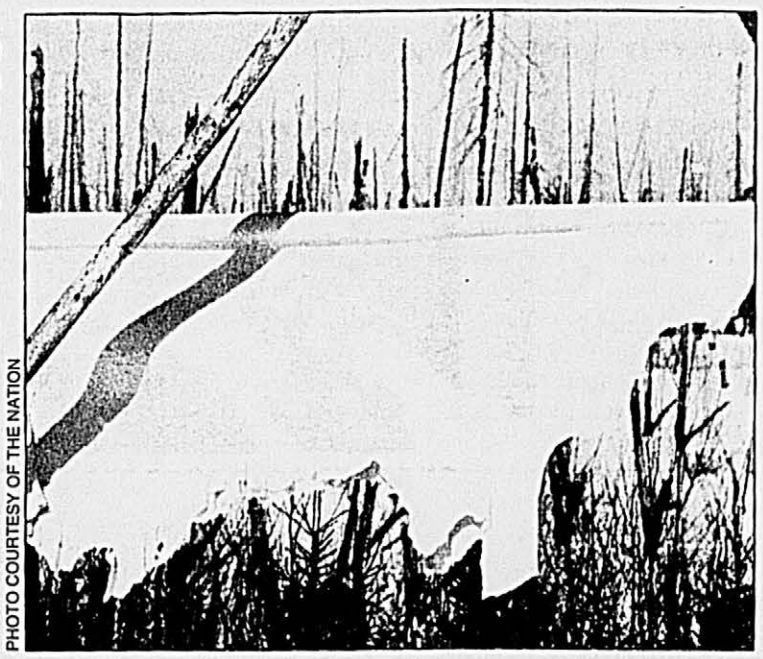


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATION

**BEAVER PELT OUT TO DRY**

The trapping, preparation and consumption of traditional food is also an important way to pass on traditional culture and skills.

Alex Roslin, an editor at *The Nation*, the Cree Nation news magazine, believes that attempts to end trapping are based on an ignorance of aboriginal perspectives.

"These people are mostly from cities, and they may have been camping a couple of times," he said. "But they have no knowledge of the land and the respect that trappers have for animals."

This perspective is exactly what Blackstone tried to bring to the attention of the European Parliament.

"The aboriginal perspective has been ignored from the start. This had only been a discussion of Europeans, North American governments and animal rights activists," he said.

Blackstone also presented a number of proposals to the European Parliament, including a ban on the leg-hold trap and a sticker on furs trapped by aboriginal people using humane methods.

# Food in tough times

## Toronto food baskets a healthy option

*by Erin Prelypchan*

In Toronto, a community group is countering rising food costs with consumer advocacy. FoodShare, a food cooperative in the Metro Toronto area, seeks as its goal to "work with the community to end hunger and improve access to affordable, nutritious food."

The organisation was originally formed ten years ago as a response to the growing number of food banks in the Toronto area. FoodShare's strategies include the advocacy of basic needs for lower income brackets and the development of 'food survival' techniques. Access to these services is universal, but the clientele is largely composed of those in lower income brackets. Paid employees as well as volunteers staff the organisation.

Catherine Scharf, a staff member of FoodShare, said that "organisations like FoodShare make it easier for community-driven activism to take place. If there is demand for a project and there are people willing to organise and participate in it, then FoodShare can help facilitate this process."

Among the services FoodShare provides is Field to Table, a home delivery service of boxes of reasonably-priced, nutritious food. This service was established in February of 1993 and has now increased its delivery to twice per month. The boxes include the Caribbean Box, the Organic Food Box and a box for pre-natal mothers. Each box costs less than $25.

Although Field to Table is subsidised by funds raised by FoodShare, it also represents the efforts of members of the community pooling their resources in order to buy healthy, affordable food.

Because Field to Table is essentially a bulk-buying scheme, the more participants there are, the more economical and effective the programme is. Currently, close to 3 000 boxes are delivered within the Toronto area and the numbers are on the rise, says Scharf.

The future of the FoodShare organisation, however, is uncertain. "The Harris government's cuts [to social welfare programmes] affect us at FoodShare daily. First and foremost, the cuts are causing pain, uncertainty and depression amongst the thousands of people on assistance who are among the majority of our programme participants," wrote Debbie Field, executive director of FoodShare, in the organisation's most recent newsletter.

While FoodShare is doing its best to counter the effects of the Harris cuts, those cuts will have a clear effect when the government funding for the organisation decreases next year.

The organisation currently relies on a combination of government, corporate, and private sponsorship. The reduction in government funding has already meant that fewer staff are now employed, Scharf said.

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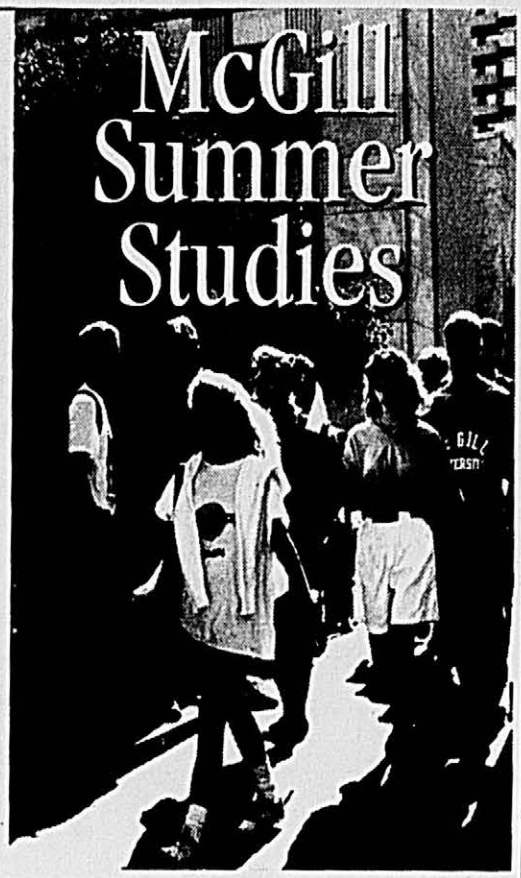


**McGill Summer Studies**
550 Sherbrooke Street West
Suite 585, West Tower
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1B9
Phone: (514) 398-5212
Fax: (514) 398-5224
E-mail:
Summer@550Sherb.Lan.McGill.Ca

Please send me *1996 Summer Studies* and information on summer accommodation in McGill University Residences

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# SALON UNITÉ

**$15.00** HAIRCUT
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# McGill WORK Study PROGRAM

The Student Aid Office is pleased to announce the continuation of the Work Study Program for the 1995-96 academic year! In addition to our regular funding, the Science Undergraduate Society has made a special contribution to the Work Study Program to create new positions in the Faculty of Science for science students.

## WHAT IS WORK STUDY?

It is a program that provides part-time on-campus employment for full-time degree students who demonstrate financial need. Eligible employers will benefit from subsidized labour costs when work study students are hired.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

Work Study student applications and brochures are available at the Student Aid office on both campuses. Applications must be returned to the Student Aid office by: **January 5, 1996**.

OFFICE OF STUDENT AID & INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISER
**Powell Building, 3637 Peel St., Room 200**

# HOLIDAYS!

*Watch for our first issue of the New Year: Jan. 8 1996.*

# NEXT SEMESTER, GET INVOLVED WITH QPIRG

## Feeling locked up in the ivory tower?

Why not become a QPIRG intern and earn academic credit for action-oriented research? QPIRG is seeking students to carry out public interest research for academic credit in the winter semester of 1996 in the following areas:

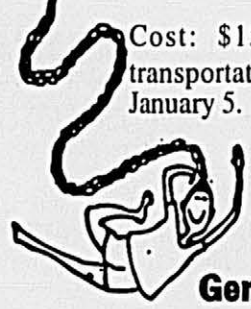
**Arts and Education:**
- Access to banking services for low income people
- Curriculum development for a student-oriented community economic development internship program
- Youth of colour and education
- Translation of documents

**Library and Information Studies:**
- Establishment of a waste management resource centre

**Management:**
- Advertising campaign for McGill's recycling program
- Campus cafeteria market research
- Development of a McGill Ghetto recycling program
- Recycling and reuse market research

**Science and Engineering:**
- Alternative energy potentials
- Canadian food industry
- Compost quality testing
- Transportation
- Vegetarian health and nutrition
- Water pollution
- Waste management

**Multidisciplinary:**
- Analysing environmental change in Mexico and supporting community organizing through popular education and technology (GIS, etc.)



## Activist Training Weekend
## Lacolle, Quebec
## January 12, 13 & 14, 1996

A weekend of skill building and issues workshops with volunteers from Concordia, McGill, UdM and UQAM. Guest Facilitator: Norman Beaudet, Resource Centre on Non-violence. *Direct Action through non-violence.*

Cost: $15 (includes food, lodging, transportation). Sign up at QPIRG before January 5.

## QPIRG
## General Interest Meeting and Open House
## Thursday, January 18. 5-7pm.
## 3647 University Street

Come meet the coordinators for all of our projects and find out how you can get involved with QPIRG during the winter semester.

For more information about any of these listings, contact us:
*Quebec Public Interest Research Group 3647 University Street. 398-7432. http://polestar.facl.mcgill.ca/vub/clubs/qpirg*

RECYCLE

# GERT'S PUB

BOTTLED BEER $2.50 - MIXED DRINKS $2.75
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# THE BEST PRICES IN THE CITY!

**Thursday, Dec. 7**

## FIELD LACROSSE PARTY...

**The Big Bang continues...**

**Friday, Dec. 8**

## Music Undergraduate Society Semi Formal

## BEAT THE CLOCK!

**($1.00 Mug/Mixed Drink 1-6pm; then price goes up 25¢ per hour)**

**Saturday, Dec. 9**

## SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

Real Retro Night every Saturday
at GERTS, Inter University.
Music of 60s, 70s, 80s
Music by NON STOP (DJ JOEL)
Open Bar 9-10 pm

McGILL CAMPUS REC

# Campus R WINTE

## INTRAMURAL SPORTS PROGRAM

| SPORT | CATEGORY | COST GST & PST Included | REGISTRATION | NUMBER OF PLAYERS | | CAPTAINS' MEETING | PLAY BEGINS | GAME DAYS AND TIMES | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | TO REGISTER | MAXIMUM | | | | |
| BASKETBALL LEAGUE | MEN A, B WOMEN | $75.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | 10 | 16 | Jan. 9, 18:30 hrs. Field House (C & D) | Jan. 14 | Mon. 18:45-23:00<br>Tue. 18:30-23:00<br>Sun. 11:00-18:00 | Field House |
| 3 ON 3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT | MEN WOMEN | $20.00 per team | Feb.14, 09:00 to Feb. 28, 17:00 | 3 | 3 | Draw posted Campus Rec Office Feb. 29, 17:00 hrs. | Mar. 1 | Mar. 1, 2, 3 | Field House |
| BALL HOCKEY LEAGUE | MEN A, B WOMEN | $75.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | 10 | 16 | Jan. 9, 18:30 hrs. Field House (C & D) | Jan. 12 | Wed. 19:15-23:00<br>Thurs. 19:15-23:00<br>Fri. 19:15-23:00<br>Sat. 09:00-18:00<br>Sun. 09:00-18:00 | Currie Gym |
| BROOMBALL LEAGUE | MEN WOMEN CO-REC | $100.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | Men - 10<br>Women - 10<br>Co-rec - 5 Men & 5 Women | 16 | Jan. 9, 18:30 hrs. Field House (C & D) | Jan. 13 | Tue. to Fri. 17:00-22:00<br>Sat. 09:00-18:00<br>Sun. 09:00-18:00 | Molson Stadium Rink |
| INNERTUBE WATERPOLO LEAGUE | CO-REC | $75.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | 7 Men & 5 Women | 18 | Jan. 9, 18:30 hrs. Field House (C & D) | Jan. 14 | Sat. 12:00-16:00<br>Sun. 12:00-16:00 | Currie Pool |
| INDOOR SOCCER LEAGUE | MEN WOMEN CO-REC | $75.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | Men - 10<br>Women - 10<br>Co-rec - 5 Men & 5 Women | 16 | Jan. 9, 18:30 hrs. (M & W)<br>Jan. 9, 19:30 hrs. (Co-Rec)<br>Field House (C & D) | Jan. 14 | Mon. 18:45-23:00<br>Tues. 18:30-23:00<br>Wed. 18:45-23:00<br>Thur. 18:30-23:00<br>Sat. 11:00-18:00<br>Sun. 11:00-18:00 | Field House |
| SQUASH TOURNAMENT | MEN A, B WOMEN | $7.00 per player | Feb. 28, 09:00 to Mar. 6, 17:00 | 1 | N/A | Draw posted Campus Rec Office Mar. 7, 17:00 hrs. | Mar. 8 | Mar. 8, 9 & 10 | Currie Gym Squash Courts |
| TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT | MEN WOMEN | $7.00 per player | Jan. 31, 09:00 to Feb. 7, 17:00 | 1 | N/A | Draw posted Campus Rec Office Feb. 8, 17:00 hrs. | Feb. 10 | Feb. 10 & 11 | Fitness Room |
| TENNIS TOURNAMENT (INDOOR) | DOUBLES | $10 per team | Mar. 20, 09:00 to Mar. 27, 17:00 | 2 men or 2 women | 2 | Draw posted Campus Rec Office Mar. 28, 17:00 hrs. | Mar. 29 | Mar. 29, 20 & 31 | Field House |
| VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE | MEN WOMEN | $75.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | 10 | 16 | Jan. 9, 18:30 hrs. Field House (C & C) | Jan. 15 | Mon. 19:15-23:00<br>Tue. 19:15-23:00<br>Wed. 19:15-23:00 | Currie Gym |
| VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE | CO-REC A,B | $75.00 per team | Dec. 11, 09:00 to Jan. 9, 17:00 | 5 Men & 5 Women | 16 | Jan. 9, 19:30 hrs. Field House (C & D) | Jan. 17 | Wed. 18:45-23:00<br>Thur. 18:30-23:00<br>Fri. 18:45-23:00 | Field House |
| 4 ON 4 VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT | CO-REC | $20.00 per team | Mar. 6, 09:00 to Mar. 13, 17:00 | 2 Men & 2 Women | 5 | Draw posted Campus Rec Office Mar. 14, 17:00 hrs. | Mar. 15 | March 15, 16, & 17 | Field House |

- In many sports space is limited—registration is on a first come first served basis.
- Please note that registration deadlines are strictly enforced.

**Registration:**
Campus Recreation Office G35
Currie Gym, 475 Pine Avenue West

### SPORTS OFFICIALS

Students interested in sports officiating should apply to the Campus Recreation Office and attend the Officials' Training Clinic. Experience is an asset but not a necessity.

#### OFFICIALS' TRAINING CLINICS

SPORTS: Ball Hockey, Basketball, Broomball, Indoor Soccer, Innertube Waterpolo, Volleyball
DATE: January 11, 1996
TIME: 17:30 hrs
LOCATION: Room 305, Currie Gymnasium

### CAPTAINS' MEETING

A representative from each team must attend the Captains' meeting for that sport. League schedules are planned and rules are distributed. A team that is not represented will not be included in the league. Note carefully, that an individual can only represent one team. Please consult the Intramural schedule for the Date, time and location of the specific meeting for your team.

# INFORMATIC

# ecreation
# R 1996

# INSTRUCTIONAL ATHLETICS PROGRAM

**COORDINATORS:** Philip Quintal & Maria Gold

The Instructional Athletics Program at McGill University features a wide variety of non-credit physical education and recreational courses. The program provides an opportunity to use the athletic facilities and to acquire or improve athletic skills. Members of the Department of Athletics staff, as well as qualified part-time instructors, teach in the program.

Courses are open to all full-time McGill students holding a validated student ID card. Full-time McGill Students are entitled to register for courses at the member's fee. The General Public, Staff, Faculty and Graduates holding a gymnasium membership card may also register for courses.

- ALL COURSES ARE CO-ED
- YOU MUST REGISTER IN PERSON WITH A FULL-TIME McGILL STUDENT ID OR MEMBERSHIP CARD
- REGISTRATION IS CONDUCTED ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS
- CASH CHEQUES, MASTERCARD, VISA AND DIRECT PAYMENT ACCEPTED.

Non-members may participate in the instructional program without purchasing a membership, **if space permits**. For this group:

- A differential fee will be charged.
- Registration for this group will begin Thursday, January 11, 1996.

| COURSE | DAY | TIME | COST (M/NM) | # WEEKS | FACILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AQUATICS** | | | | | |
| YELLOW, ORANGE | THURSDAY | 17:30-18:25 | 28/48 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | SATURDAY | 09:30-10:25 | 28/48 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| RED, MAROON | TUESDAY | 19:30-20:25 | 28/48 | 8 | CURRIE POOL |
| | THURSDAY | 17:30-18:25 | 28/48 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | SATURDAY | 10:30-11:25 | 28/48 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| BLUE, GREEN,GREY, WHITE | WEDNESDAY | 19:30-20:40 | 30/50 | 8 | CURRIE POOL |
| | THURSDAY | 18:30-19:40 | 30/50 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | SATURDAY | 11:30-12:40 | 30/50 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| PRE-SCHOOL (AGES 18 MONTHS - 5 YEARS) | SUNDAY | 11:00-11:45 | 28/48 | 8 | CURRIE POOL |
| SWIM (Private) | By Appointment | | 32/36 | 1 | CURRIE POOL |
| AQUACISES | TUES&THURS | 12:15 12:55 | 40/80 | 10 | CURRIE POOL |
| SWIM FIT (Cardio-Respiratory Endurance) | TUES&THURS | 12:15-13:10 | 40/80 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | TUES&THURS | 18:30-19:25 | 40/80 | 8 | CURRIE POOL |
| STROKE IMPROVEMENT | MONDAY | 18:30-19:25 | 25/45 | 8 | CURRIE POOL |
| | TUESDAY | 17:30-18:25 | 25/45 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| DIVING (1 M Elementary) | THURSDAY | 19:30-20:25 | 30/50 | 8 | CURRIE POOL |
| LIFESAVING 1,2,3 (Introduction to Program) | SATURDAY | 11:30-12:40 | 30/50 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| LEADERS | TUES & THURS : | | | | |
| | CLASS | 18:30-19:30 | 75/115 Plus Exam Fee | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | POOL | 19:30-21:00 | | | |
| BRONZE CROSS | WEDNESDAY | | | | |
| (Prerequisite Bronze Medallion) | CLASS | 18:30-19:30 | 65/90 Plus Exam Fee | 10 | WESTON POOL |
| | POOL | 19:30-21:00 | | | |
| S.C.U.B.A. | TUES & THURS | | | | |
| | CLASS | 18:45-20:15 | 240/270 | 6 | CURRIE POOL |
| | POOL | 20:30-22:30 | 408/409 | | |
| (Good Swimmer Screen Test Required MUST ATTEND FIRST CLASS) | | | | | |
| **DANCE** | | | | | |
| FLAMENCO | TUES&THURS | 20:15-21:10 | 43/88 | 8 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| JAZZ I | TUES&THURS | 08:30-09:55 | 43/88 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| | TUES&THURS | 18:30-19:55 | 43/88 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| JAZZ II | TUES&THURS | 20:00-21:25 | 43/88 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| JAZZ III | MON\WED\FRI | 18:00-19:25 | 67/112 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| SOCIAL DANCE I | MONDAY | 20:30-21:55 | 33/53 | 8 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| | WEDNESDAY | 19:00-20:25 | 33/53 | 8 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| | WEDNESDAY | 20:30-21:55 | 33/53 | 8 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| SOCIAL DANCE II | MONDAY | 19:00-20:25 | 33/53 | 8 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| **FITNESS** | | | | | |
| ACTION AEROBICS (High/Low) | MON&WED | 16:30-17:25 | 33/78 | 10 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| | TUES&THURS | 12:00-12:55 | 33/78 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| | TUES&THURS | 16:00-16:55 | 33/78 | 10 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| ACTION AEROBICS (SUPERFIT) | MON & WED | 17:30-18:55 | | | |
| | FRI | 17:00-18:25 | 67/112 | 10 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| BODY DESIGN | MON & WED | 13:15-13:55 | 32/77 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 11:00-11:55 | 21/46 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| CARDIO FUNK | TUES&THURS | 18:15-19:10 | 33/78 | 10 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| CARDIO FUNK ADVANCED | TUES&THURS | 19:15-20:10 | 33/78 | 10 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| LOW IMPACT ADVANCED | TUES&THURS | 17:00-18:10 | 52/97 | 10 | AUXILIARY GYM |
| INTRO STEP | MON | 12:00-12:55 | 33/53 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| | MON&WED | 16:00-16:55 | 46/91 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| STEP | MON&WED | 08:00-08:55 | 46/91 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| | TUES&THURS | 16:00-16:55 | 46/91 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| | TUES&THURS | 18:15-19:10 | 46/91 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| STEP & PUMP | TUES&THURS | 08:00-08:55 | 46/91 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| SUPER STEP | TUES&THURS | 12:00-13:10 | 52/97 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| | TUES&THURS | 17:00-18:10 | 52/97 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| SUPER STEP & PUMP | MON\WED\FRI | 17:00-18:10 | 62/107 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 10:00-11:25 | 33/58 | 10 | DANCE STUDIO |
| TOTAL BODY CONDITIONING | MON\WED\FRI | 12:15-13:10 | 67/112 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| | TUES&THURS | 16:00-17:10 | 52/97 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| WEIGHT TRAINING | MONDAY | 20:00-21:30 | 27/40 | 5 | 233/WEIGHT ROOM |
| | TUESDAY | 08:30-10:00 | 27/40 | 5 | 233/WEIGHT ROOM |
| | WEDNESDAY | 20:00-21:30 | 27/40 | 5 | 233/WEIGHT ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 09:00-10:30 | 27/40 | 5 | 233/WEIGHT ROOM |
| WEIGHT TRAINING CLINIC | SAT & SUN JANUARY 20 & 21 | 11:00-13:00 | 17/22 | 2 | 233/WEIGHT ROOM |
| WEIGHT TRAINING (Private) | By Appointment | | 27/40 | 1 | |
| PERSONAL FITNESS APPRAISAL | By Appointment | | 36/45/60 | 1 | LAB |
| **MARTIAL ARTS** | | | | | |
| AIKIDO | TUESDAY & FRIDAY | 18:00-19:55 17:00-18:55 | 60/105 | 10 | TURNER BONE |
| CAPOEIRA/SAVATE/ LUTTE PARISIENNE | MON\WED\FRI | 15:30-16:55 | 67/112 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| JUDO | MON&WED | 17:30-19:25 | 60/105 | 10 | TURNER BONE |
| SHORINJIRU I | MON&WED | 18:15-19:40 | 46/91 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| SHORINJIRU II | MON&WED | 19:45-21:10 | 46/91 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| TKD/MUAY THAI/SHOOTO | MON\WED\FRI | 14:00-15:25 | 67/112 | 10 | FITNESS ROOM |
| WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE | TUES&THURS | 16:00-17:25 | 70/115 | 10 | TURNER BONE |
| | SATURDAY | 10:00-11:25 | 35/80 | 10 | TURNER BONE |
| **VARIA** | | | | | |
| BASIC FIRST AID (Includes CPR Heart Saver) | SAT JAN 20 & SUN JAN 21 | 09:30-17:30 | 87/92 | 2 | 305/306 |
| CPR BASIC | SAT JAN 27 & SUN JAN 28 | 09:30-17:30 | 80/87 | 2 | 305/306 |
| CPR RE-CERT | SAT JAN 27 | 09:30-17:30 | 38/48 | 1 | 408 |
| FENCING I | MON&WED | 08:00-08:55 | 40/80 | 8 | DANCE STUDIO |
| | TUES&THURS | 19:15-20:10 | 40/80 | 8 | DANCE STUDIO |
| FENCING II | TUES&THURS | 20:15-21:10 | 40/80 | 8 | DANCE STUDIO |
| GOLF | MONDAY | 16:00-17:00 | 28/43 | 6 | GOLF ROOM |
| | THURSDAY | 16:00-17:00 | 28/43 | 6 | GOLF ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 10:00-11:00 | 28/43 | 6 | GOLF ROOM |
| HOCKEY I | WEDNESDAY | 15:15-16:45 | 32/52 | 8 | WINTER STADIUM |
| HOCKEY II | FRIDAY | 14:00-15:30 | 36/56 | 8 | WINTER STADIUM |
| SKATING | WEDNESDAY | 14:00-15:15 | 27/42 | 6 | WINTER STADIUM |
| | SATURDAY | 10:45-12:05 | 36/56 | 8 | WINTER STADIUM |
| SKATING (Private) | by appointment | | 17/19 | 1 | WINTER STADIUM |
| TAI CHI I | MON&WED | 16:00-16:55 | 46/86 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| HATHA YOGA I | MON&WED | 08:00-08:55 | 32/72 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| | MON&WED | 18:15-19:25 | 42/82 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| | TUES&THURS | 08:00-08:55 | 32/72 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| | TUES&THURS | 16:00-17:10 | 42/82 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| | TUES&THURS | 17:15-18:25 | 42/82 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| HATHA YOGA II | MON&WED | 17:00-18:10 | 42/82 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| | TUES&THURS | 18:30-19:40 | 42/82 | 8 | MEMORIAL HALL |
| IYENGAR YOGA | THURSDAY - 17:30-19:00 | | 32/57 | 10 | TURNER BONE |

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO FITNESS**

| COURSE | DAY | TIME | COST(M/NM) | # WEEKS | FACILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Workout | Tues/Thurs | 17:30-18:25 | $2.50/$1.70* | 16 | Fitness room |
| | Friday | 16:00-16:55 | | | Dance Room |
| | Sat & Sun | 12:00-12:55 | | | Fitness Room |
| Step | Mon/Wed/Fri | 17:00-17:55 | | | Dance Studio |
| | Sat & Sun | 13:00-13:55 | | | Dance Studio |

Resumes Jan 3, 1996

*Booklets of 10 tickets for $17.00 purchased in advance (Members Only)

| COURSE | DAY | TIME | COST (M/NM) | # WEEKS | FACILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RACQUETS** | | | | | |
| SQUASH INTRO | MONDAY | 08:30-09:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | MONDAY | 09:15-10:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | MONDAY | 16:00-16:45 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | TUESDAY | 16:45-17:30 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | TUESDAY | 17:30-18:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | WEDNESDAY | 09:15-10:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | WEDNESDAY | 12:15-13:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | WEDNESDAY | 13:00-13:45 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | THURSDAY | 16:00-16:45 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | THURSDAY | 16:45-17:30 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | FRIDAY | 08:30-09:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | FRIDAY | 09:15-10:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | FRIDAY | 14:30-15:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | FRIDAY | 15:15-16:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | FRIDAY | 16:00-16:45 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | SATURDAY | 10:45-11:30 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | SATURDAY | 12:15-13:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | SUNDAY | 11:30-12:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | SUNDAY | 13:00-13:45 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| SQUASH INTER | MONDAY | 16:45-17:30 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | WEDNESDAY | 08:30-09:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | THURSDAY | 17:30-18:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | SATURDAY | 11:30-12:15 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| | SUNDAY | 12:15-13:00 | 22/37 | 6 | SQUASH COURTS |
| SQUASH (Private) | By Appointment | | 17/19 | 1 | SQUASH COURTS |
| TENNIS INTRO | MONDAY | 14:00-14:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A & B |
| | TUESDAY | 17:00-17:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | THURSDAY | 17:00-17:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | FRIDAY | 08:00-08:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | SATURDAY | 11:00-12:55 | 30/45 | 3 | FH COURT A&B |
| | TUES&THURS | 16:00-16:55 | 60/90 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| TENNIS INTER | MONDAY | 15:00-15:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | TUESDAY | 17:00-17:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT C&D |
| | WEDNESDAY | 11:00-11:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | FRIDAY | 09:00-09:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | FRIDAY | 19:00-19:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT C&D |
| | SATURDAY | 13:00-14:55 | 30/45 | 3 | FH COURT A&B |
| | TUES&THURS | 16:00-16:55 | 60/90 | 6 | FH COURT C&D |
| TENNIS ADVANCED | WEDNESDAY | 12:00-12:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT A&B |
| | THURSDAY | 17:00-17:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT C&D |
| | FRIDAY | 20:00-20:55 | 30/45 | 6 | FH COURT C&D |
| TENNIS (Private) | By Appointment | | 17/20 | 1 | |
| **OUTDOOR PURSUITS** | | | | | |
| CROSS COUNTRY SKIING | SATURDAY | 09:00-10:00 | 36/52 | 4 | SKI ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 10:45-12:15 | 36/52 | 4 | SKI ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 12:30-14:00 | 36/52 | 4 | SKI ROOM |
| | SATURDAY | 14:00-15:30 | 36/52 | 4 | SKI ROOM |
| CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLINIC | SUN., FEB. 4 | 13:00-16:00 | 15/18 | 1 | SKI ROOM |
| CROSS COUNTRY SKI WEEK-END | SAT&SUN | MARCH 16&17 | 110/115 | 2 | |
| EQUESTRIAN | FRIDAY | 16:00-17:00 | 85/90 | 6 | EQUITATION ELYSEE |
| | SATURDAY | 14:00-15:00 | 85/90 | 6 | EQUITATION ELYSEE |
| | SUNDAY | 13:00-14:00 | 85/90 | 6 | EQUITATION ELYSEE |
| | SUNDAY | 14:00-15:00 | 85/90 | 6 | EQUITATION ELYSEE |
| ICE CLIMBING | SUN., FEB. 4 | 07:00-17:00 | 70/75 | 1 | Val David |
| ICE CLIMBING& CROSS COUNTRY SKIING | SAT&SUN FEB. 10&11 | | 110/115 | 2 | Val David |
| KAYAKING | MONDAY | 21:00-22:00 | 80/100 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | MONDAY | 22:00-23:00 | 80/100 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| | WEDNESDAY | 21:00-22:00 | 80/100 | 8 | WESTON POOL |
| KAYAKING ADVANCED | WEDNESDAY | 22:00-23:00 | 80/100 | 8 | WESTON POOL |

## REGISTRATION

Begins Wednesday, January 10, 1996
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Most courses begin the week of Monday, January 15, 1996

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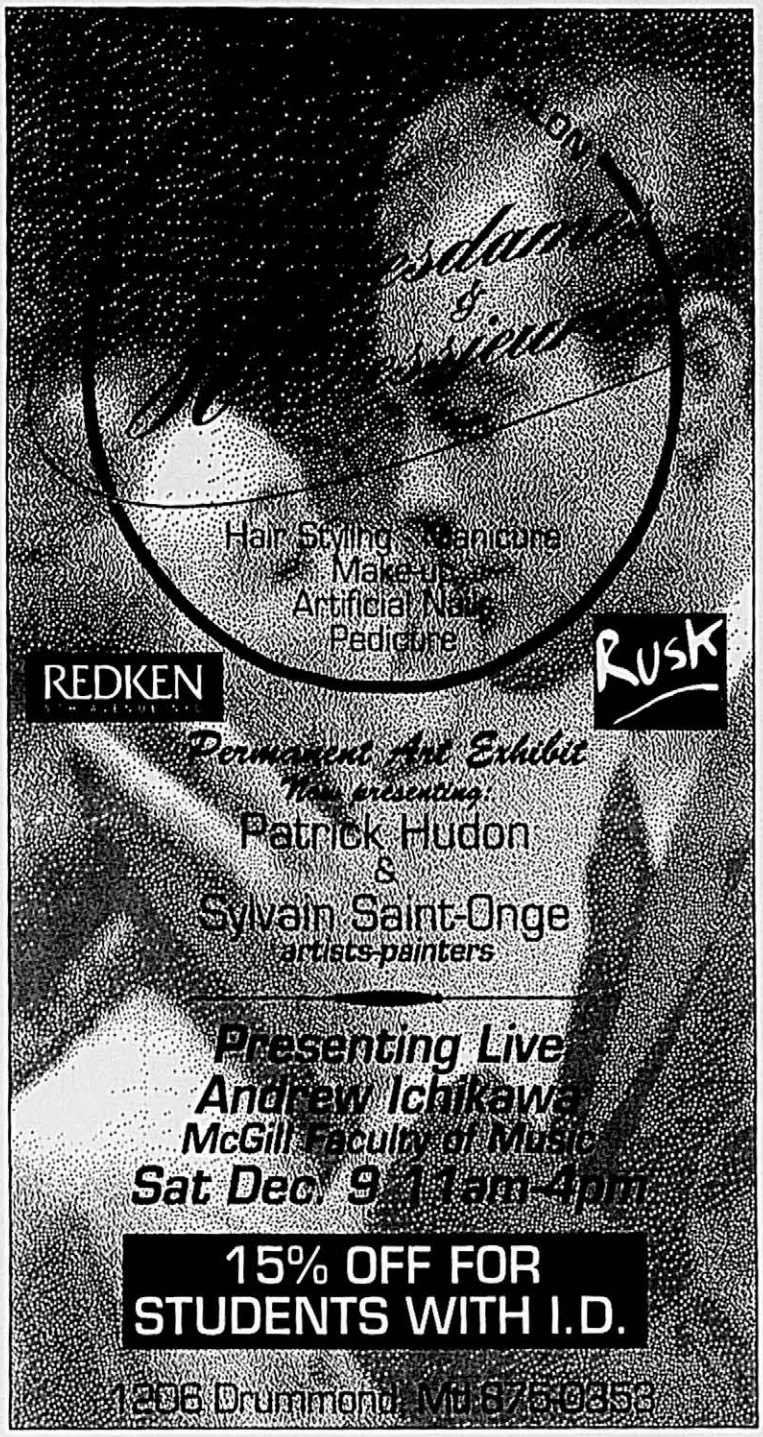



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# Just an industrial accident?

## Montréal's Cambior downplays disaster in Guyana

*by Anup Grewal*

On the morning of August 19, the 20 000 people living along Guyana's Essequibo River woke up to the news of a cyanide spill from the nearby Omai gold mine.

By the time the leakage was plugged, 1.3 billion litres of cyanide and heavy metal-laced effluent had poured into the Essequibo from its Omai tributary.

This was the second such spill that the foreign-owned mine had faced in the past 3 months.

While Omai Gold Mine Limited (OGML) tried to downplay the incident, both the Guyanese government and various international agencies reported the death of fish stocks, and warned the inhabitants of the region — mostly small scale fishers, loggers and tradesmen — not to drink or wash in the water.

On August 22, President Cheddi Jagan declared the 50-mile stretch of the Essequibo an environmental disaster zone.

Today, almost four months later, the Commission of Inquiry is set to report to the National Assembly on whether to allow the Omai gold mine to re-open.

But many groups claim that the inquiry has been manipulated by OGML and its parent companies, Canada's Cambior Incorporated and the Denver-based Golden Star Resources Limited.

Patricia Adams of Toronto's Probe International, an environmental monitoring agency, says OGML has neither disclosed information, nor acknowledged the harm it has done to the people living near the mine.

"They should be good corporate citizens and disclose all the information so that the Guyanese can make a decision on whether to open or close [the mine]," says Adams.

### The Canada Connection

In 1990, the Montréal-based Cambior, one of Canada's largest mining companies, joined Golden Star and the Guyanese government to build the Omai gold mine.

Robert LaValliere, Cambior's Montréal spokesperson, says his corporation was perfect for the project because it has mining and processing expertise. Cambior presently controls 65 per cent of the shares and the mine's daily operation.

However, Dermod Travis of Montréal's PIRA Communications research company, which is working with local groups in Guyana to make OGML accountable for the August disaster, asserts that Cambior is far from perfect.

"Cambior has had EPA [environmental protection agency] problems both in Alaska and Environment department problems in Québec."

Travis added that Cambior went into Guyana and essentially "wrote their own regulation package in return for the five per cent of profits that would go to Guyana."

LaValliere insists that Cambior followed the standards set by the World Bank and the Canadian government and applied them to Guyana, which doesn't have such standards.

*"I want to repeat that our developing economy needs more investment to come, I also want to repeat that when investors come , we will ensure that they respect our people , our laws and our environment."*

*— Guyanese President Cheddi Jagan*

But Adams maintains that the World Bank and the Canadian government are more interested in providing insurance packages for companies that want to invest in 'unstable' countries.

She adds that Cambior would never have gone into Guyana had it not been for protection plans guarding against loss of profits or assets due to nationalisation, political insurrection, or war.

LaValliere concedes that for the sake of Cambior's shareholders, the company did take out what he called the "political risk insurance."

### The Summitville Connection

While Cambior, as the biggest shareholder of OGML has been the focus of much criticism, its partner Golden Star has been left largely out of the limelight.

But Golden Star has a tarnished image too, throwing Cambior's choice of business affiliations into question as well.

The major promoter of Golden Star, Robert Friedland has run from mining disaster to mining disaster.

In the 1980s, Friedland was head of Galatic Resources, a company running a similar gold mine in Summitville, Colorado. When he discovered that cyanide sludge was leaking into the area's water system — causing a mini environmental disaster of its own, Friedland left his position at Galactic.

According to Travis, Friedland then invested in Golden Star and "went gold hunting in Guyana."

Friedland hired the same Vancouver company, Knight Pisold, that had designed the flawed Summitville mine to design the Omai mine.

Recently, the ongoing investigation into the Omai dam disaster has revealed that its collapse, and the cyanide spill, were also due to structural flaws.

Speculates one development agency spokesperson, Cambior has gotten away with such low standards because Guyana is in a weakened bargaining position.

"Guyana is on an IMF and World Bank adjustment programme, [so] there is a limited civil service, no EPA and a limited capacity to monitor [the actions of companies]," says the spokesperson.

The agency claims that Guyana "has a debilitated infrastructure, and so when foreign companies come in and promise roads, schools, etc. that the government can't provide, the government is willing to give concessions."

LaValliere readily admits that Cambior meets that description. "[OGML] represents a big chunk of the economy of Guyana, and is one of the biggest foreign employers in the country," he says, adding that it represents 20 to 25 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Despite the potential benefits of such investment, President Cheddi Jagan lamented the lack of respect foreign investors have in Guyana.

"I want to repeat that our developing economy needs more investment to come, I also want to repeat that when investors come, we will ensure that they respect our people, our laws and our environment," Jagan recently declared.

Travis concludes that while the government of Guyana may want to take a strong position against Cambior and Golden Star, it does not want to scare away further foreign investment.

*"The fact is that a disaster is when you kill humans. So the press should report on the facts. The fact is that the [Omai] spill didn't kill humans and five days after, the marine life was back to normal."*

*— Robert LaValliere, Cambior Incorporated*

### Not a good corporate citizen

Cambior has taken full advantage of Guyana's reluctance to alienate their investment.

PIRA has had to intervene twice in actions taken by Cambior since September: First, the company tried to take advantage of illiterate fishermen by offering them a dubious settlement of $150 Canadian for the loss of their fish stocks. Then in October, Cambior pressured Guyana's president to limit the duration of the inquiry so that the mine could re-open in 30 days

Travis says Cambior's attempt to dictate the time frame of an inquiry would be unacceptable in Canada. While the government did not react to the letter in any way, the head of the Commisson of Inquiry did resign.

But LaValliere insists that the international media has blown things out of proportion.

He points out that "all the cyanide spilled was lower than Canadian standards for drinking water at all levels."

LaValliere attributes this cyanide "paranoia" to a historical legacy. In 1978, in the Guyanese town of Jonestown, members of the People's Temple Cult committed a mass suicide by cyanide poisoning. "When people talk of cyanide, they remember this [the Jonestown event], but this [the Omai spill] is totally different." asserts LaValliere.

In the end, for LaValliere, it was only a few fish that were killed.

"It was just an accident," he says.

"The fact is that a disaster is when you kill humans.... The fact is that the [Omai] spill didn't kill humans and five days after, the marine life was back to normal," continues LaVaillere.

PHOTO COURTESY OF *CARIBBEAN WEEK*

**CYANIDE WASTE FLOWING INTO THE OMAI RIVER FROM THE GOLD MINE SITE SHORTLY AFTER THE SPILL**

But for those living along the Essequibo, the Omai spill was a disaster, as the international community banned all Guyanese fish stocks and tourism dropped in the area.

### Bringing out the facts

Despite Cambior's denials and subsequent apologies to the people of Guyana, it still has to be made accountable for its negligence in this whole affair.

At this moment, PIRA and Probe have joined forces with groups in Guyana, including the National Committee for the Defense Against Omai, The Guyana Human Rights Commission and the Amerindian Rights group to fight Cambior.

Despite a lack of funds and a lack of information, PIRA is trying to launch a lawsuit against Cambior in Québec.

Though Adams acknowledges that it is difficult to boycott a company without a retail face, she and Travis both stress that people can take action against Cambior.

Adams says that shareholders can make their voices heard and make Cambior follow at least the Québec standards for mining corporations.

Travis points to the role that universities can play in sharing information on multinational corporations. "University campuses should form committees to handle things like this because there are not enough resources."

In the end, Travis finds that he is "appalled that the people in North America have not found the means to stop companies we would not allow to operate in our own countries, to have a carte blanche to exploit another country's resources."

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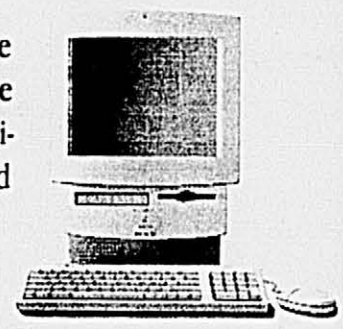

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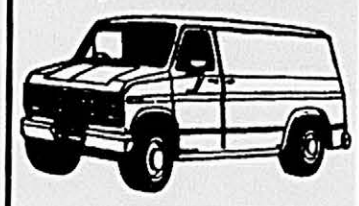


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# NO UNIONS FOR LIMITÉ

## Unionisation bids in retail curtailed by new Ontario labour law

*by Andrea Mason*

A trendy retail clothing store in a suburban Toronto mall hardly seems like the setting for a revolution. However, that is exactly what took place in the Ontario Limité stores in the beginning of 1994.

Fed up with humiliation and intimidation on the job, two young women, Nancy MacLean and Tammy Gulati, started a drive to unionise the Limité retail outlets where they worked.

The unionisation drives began in response to certain tactics employed by Limité to keep its employees in perpetual fear of losing their jobs. According to Gulati, who was employed at the Square One outlet in Mississauga Ontario, the "Help Wanted" sign was placed permanently in the window as a reminder to the store's employees that they could easily be replaced.

Also, unreasonably high sales quotas were imposed on the saleswomen. According to MacLean, at the Bramalea outlet, manager Christine Carter threatened to fire any employee who did not sell an average of $50 an hour, even though Carter had sold only $31 an hour herself.

"The Limité workers were subjected to arbitrary harassment. Managers would change employees' shifts at a day's notice, call staff meetings only 24 hours in advance and refuse to grant sick leave," said Deena Ladd, the organiser from the International Garment Ladies' Workers Union — the union that helped both Gulati and MacLean in their initiatives. "This was management's way of taking out the people who were willing to stand up for themselves," she added.

Limité pays its employees the Ontario minimum wage of $6.70 an hour. A one per cent sales commission is expected to supplement this low wage. The policy creates hostility amongst workers as they battle each other for the additional income. In fact, Limité's managers actively encourage competition amongst its saleswomen. Friendships between employees are discouraged. Workers are placed strategically apart at different spots on the floor to ensure that personal attachments do not develop.

Limité engages in practices which verge on illegal and include outright racial discrimination. Employees are often not paid overtime and are not given mandatory breaks. According to employees of the Square One outlet, when black women submit applications for employment a small "b" is written on their resumes.

According to Ladd, employees were prohibited from playing "black music" (rap and reggae) and an employee at the Square One outlet was forbidden from wearing a gold Jamaican pendant around her neck.

**The "Help Wanted" sign was placed permanently in the window as a reminder to the store's employees that they could easily be replaced.**

### Fighting stereotypes

Clothing chains have been able to get away with these tactics largely because of the high turn-over rates of employees in the retail sector. Many young people working in this sector don't expect to remain at their jobs for long — especially not long enough to endure the long and drawn out labour negotiations necessary to improve working conditions.

**"[Ontario Premier Mike] Harris' Bill 7 puts all the power in the employers' hands. It takes away the democratic right of workers who would like to form unions,"**
**— James Turk, Ontario Federation of Labour**

In addition, employers are convinced that teenage girls do not really need their jobs. Popular culture dictates that the stereotypical teenage girl spends her paycheque on clothes, makeup, fashion magazines and movies.

Many employers take this stereotype to mean that their teenage saleswomen are wrapped up in a 90210-like existence involving an endless cycle of shopping, boys and parties. Few employers would expect the average 16 year old girl to be aware of her labour rights.

"Limité was so used to complete control and to exploiting its workers that the union came as an upsetting shock," commented Ladd.

What many retail stores fail to understand is that the nature of their employment sector is fast changing. With fewer employment opportunities in an uncertain economy, the traditionally high turnover rate at clothing stores has slowed down. Many of the young women depend on the income from their jobs to finance post-secondary education or to contribute to household expenses.

Young people also have a heightened sense of their right to fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. Employees are staying at their jobs for increasingly long periods of time and they're willing to fight for their labour rights.

MacLean and Gulati both took their rights to unionise seriously. It was more than just a bid for higher wages — in fact wages were never even raised as an issue. Ladd points out that both women were asking for fair scheduling, basic adherence to the Employment Conditions Act, fair grievance process, fair distribution of hours and to not be forced to wear Limité's clothes on the job.

### Success and defeat

Gulati and MacLean were eventually successful in their bid to unionise, despite intense resistance by Limité. In the hope of crushing the morale of the unionisation drive, Limité attempted to weed out the women whom they had designated as the ringleaders of the unionisation drives.

Maclean was even fired from her job but the union filed a complaint and she was re-hired with back-pay.

Likewise, most other attempts by the store to crush the formation of a union proved unsuccessful as the store was slapped with numerous complaints from the labour board.

However, Gulati and MacLean's victories were short-lived. Montréal-based Bigi Canada Ltd., which is the parent company of 64 Limité and Bigi stores across Canada, stepped in and closed down the unionised stores.

According to Ladd, this move was intended as a scare tactic to discourage other outlets from attempting to unionise.

That Bigi was able to do this is telling of the lengths that some companies will go to keep unions out of their businesses. What is even more discouraging for those trying to fight this domination is the new labour laws in Ontario, which are seen by many as anti-union.

THIS MAGAZINE PHOTO BY DAVID HYDE

TAMMY GULATI AND NANCY MACLEAN

In November, Ontario's recently elected Conservative government, which is led by Premier Mike Harris, introduced a law which allows companies to use scabs during strikes, makes it more difficult for unions to enact and sustain collective bargaining agreements and encourages employers to deny their employees the right to participate in the decision-making process.

**According to employees of the Square One outlet of Limité, when black women submit applications for employment a small "b" is written on their resumes.**

Much of this law overturns the progress that unions made under the former NDP government, especially in the case of the NDPs ban on the use of strike breakers.

James Turk of the Ontario Federation of Labour says that Ontario Premier Mike Harris' new labour laws will prove detrimental to any future bids to unionise particularly in sectors with high turnover rates.

"Harris' Bill 7 puts all the power in the employers' hands. It takes away the democratic right of workers who would like to form unions," declared Turk.

"Bill 7 and the repeal of Bill 40 take away essential labour laws that allowed the Garment Workers Union to organise Limité in the first place," agreed Ladd.

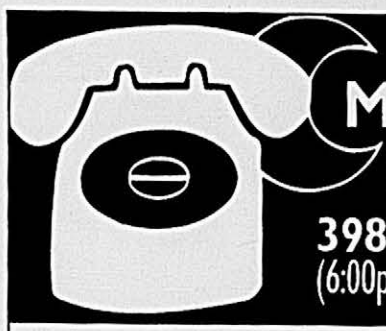
The new law will be particularly difficult on young people working in the service sector.

"The law targets the young, vulnerable workers in the low-end, minimum-wage section of the economy," said Ladd.

Ladd and Turk both agreed that Ontario is moving in the direction of the US, where it is impossible for service sector employees to unionise because labour laws are so harsh and companies immediately fire anyone involved in unionisation drives.

Turk sent a foreboding message concerning the new law and young people in Ontario, saying that "it will be harder for young people to protect themselves. They will be more vulnerable to the whims of employers."

*With files from Naomi Klein and This Magazine*



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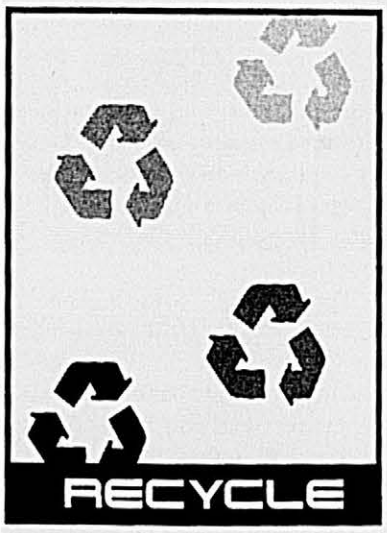




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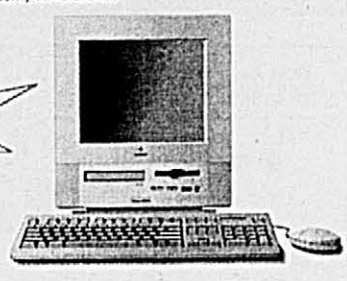

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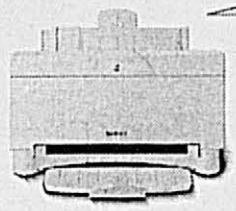

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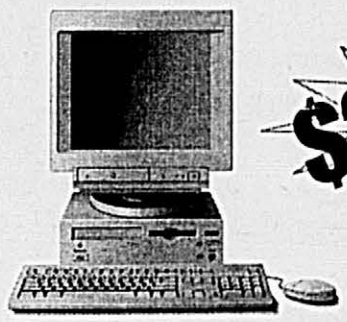

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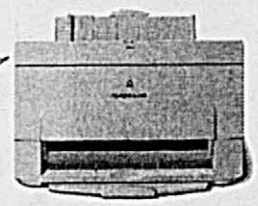

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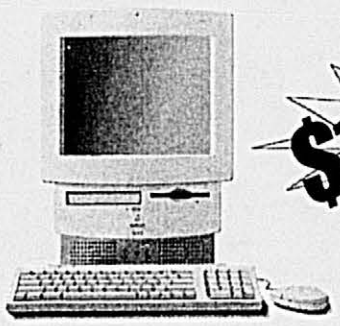

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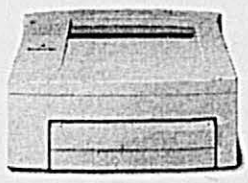

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